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Letters

SEATTLE 10 YEARS AFTER
Nation.
THE SECRET US WAR IN PAKISTAN
US SPECIAL FORCES ENLIST BLACKWATER'S HELP ON COVERT OPERATIONS
AN INVESTIGATION BY JEREMY SCAHILL

Ho-Hum Sports, Hi-Ho Zirin!

COLUMBUS, OHIO

I'm not a sports fan. (In fact, I became an opera junkie about thirty years ago when the only alternatives for TV distraction while I vacuumed were football or *The Marriage of Figaro*.) Nor do I have any interest in Tiger Woods's personal life. But I do take a keen interest in the politics and finance of sports, and Dave Zirin always educates me. I knew nothing about Woods's sponsors. Zirin's piece about the flap, "Caged Tiger" [Jan. 4], was the first that made sense to me. Thank you, *Nation.*

LINDA SLEFFEL

'The Hurt Locker' at CUNY

NEW YORK CITY

Eric Alterman ["The Liberal Media," Dec. 21/28] attributes to me something I have never thought, let alone said. I did not say *The Hurt Locker*'s "portrayal of the American soldiers as decent human beings contradicted the message they received in training to lay aside their human feelings in the service of their military mission." I said that soldiers and marines are taught, in training and by combat, to put aside their personal feelings and to play the roles they've been assigned in an educational division of labor. They're taught to become more human, not less, by playing these roles, by stepping outside themselves, by understanding how others will perceive them—by acquiring identities that negate what they have been in the relatively small worlds they came from. They're taught that if they take any of it personally, they put themselves and their comrades at risk. If they are well trained, in other words, soldiers and marines know that the personal "authenticity" embodied by the hero of *The Hurt Locker*—the lonely risk of death in soulful combat with intricate evil somehow makes life more meaningful—is the drug that will kill them. Unlike Chris Hedges, Mark Boal and Kathryn Bigelow, soldiers and marines know this drug is not addictive. They avoid it, anyway.

I have another vested interest in setting the record straight. That "irrelevant story" I told in response to Alterman's question was, in fact, a lie. The truth is that my son is a marine who has been to Iraq and back. So I have seen, heard and read a lot about his training and his experience in combat. I told the story as if it were about a friend's son because I didn't want to pull emotional rank on the angry man at the back of the room.

JAMES LIVINGSTON

Alterman Replies

NEW YORK CITY

I have a hard time seeing what has so upset James Livingston. Rhetoric aside, he does not dispute the truth of anything I wrote. He did call *The Hurt Locker* "a lie." He has never witnessed the operations of a US bomb squad in Iraq, as the film's screenwriter, James Boal, did. He does believe that US soldiers are taught to lay aside their human feelings in the service of their military mission. He did respond to my question with an irrelevant story about a friend's son's enlistment, though he now says he was lying about the identity of that young man. I take no issue with Livingston's observations about his son, whose sacrifices I admire and appreciate. I'm glad he's taken the opportunity to set the record straight. But his remarks here bear little resemblance to those he made at CUNY, as he himself admits.

ERIC ALTERMAN

Adieu, Swank Filer—III

MILL VALLEY, CALIF.

I express my gloom over your "Farewell, Frank" item in "Noted" [Dec. 14]. Frank W. Lewis and his puzzle are the reason I subscribe. I do not know Frank, but he is a friend. He taught me the hidden message, the artwork of the anagram. Any billboard I see, any license plate or sign I read, I ask myself, "What would Frank do with that? How would he parse that word?" I cannot slurp a bowl of "stew" without thinking "wild west." Frank was our word scout.

MICHAEL D. HOY

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The Terror Trap

The power of terrorism is its ability to provoke counterproductive and irrational state responses that make citizens less secure and less free in the long run. This is what the Obama administration must guard against as it adjusts its counterterrorism strategy in the aftermath of the attempted downing of a Northwest airliner on Christmas Day by Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab.

Above all, the president must avoid being pushed into the terror trap by right-wing critics like Dick Cheney and Joe Lieberman. Their calls for stepping up intervention in Yemen and rolling back civil liberties at home are exactly the kind of actions we should avoid.

EDITORIAL

In response to hawkish critics, the administration and some of its supporters—including a few progressive commentators—have been reinforcing some of the wrong lessons. They cite the administration's decision to send 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan, the military's increasing drone strikes and not-so-secret war in Pakistan, and the dispatch of Special Forces to Yemen to attack the local Al Qaeda group there. And the administration's decision to subject all citizens from fourteen nations to intensified airport searches is an egregious case of ethnic/national profiling that will do little to stop terrorism but will be quite effective at spreading anti-American sentiment.

The attempted Christmas attack, along with other incidents of the past year, should call into question key parts of the Obama strategy. For there is increasing evidence that the US wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan are generating new terrorist threats. Those wars—specifically, American and British killings of Muslims on Muslim soil—were probably a major factor in the turn to radical Islam and terrorism of Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan and the five Virginia men who were recently arrested in Pakistan, much like the London bombers before them and Abdulmutallab as well.

The Christmas incident demonstrates ever more clearly that the best antidote to terrorism is not military action but good intelligence and police work and appropriate security measures designed to keep terrorists out of the country. That is why there has been so much attention (appropriately) given to the intelligence failure to connect the dots and to have a coordinated no-fly list. It also demonstrates the importance of Obama's emphasis on restoring America's good name in an effort to deny Islamist radicals a sympathetic audience. Indeed, the first line of defense against terrorism is the Muslim community. We have seen that in the case of the families of the five Virginia men and again with Abdulmutallab's father, who warned the US Embassy in Nigeria about his son's radicalization.

It would be a catastrophic mistake to treat Yemen as a new terror launching pad that requires US military action. To be sure, the Al Qaeda group there has taken credit for the attempted attack, but its purpose may be to draw the United States further and more openly into the conflict in Yemen in the hope of garnering more support from a public that for historical reasons is largely anti-American.

The appropriate response to the failed Christmas attack is not to open yet another military front but to wind down our wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan and emphasize those things that make America an integrated society of many races, faiths and ethnicities. Such a strategy would cost far less than our wars and would provide much greater security in the long run.

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James Hansen: Solving the climate problem

Jeremy Scahill: Blackwater and the Khost bombing

Dave Zirin: Faculty protest Texas football coach's raise

Video Christopher Hayes: Why attack Obama on terrorist acts?

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Slideshow Obama's challenges in the year ahead

Web Letters Express yourself!

Looting Social Security

He's baaack—the Wall Street billionaire who wants to loot Social Security. This time, Pete Peterson has invented a "news service" to promote his right-wing rants about shrinking the only retirement system available to millions of working people. He styles himself as a patriot saving the nation from fiscal insolvency and has committed $1 billion to the cause (a chunk of the wealth he accumulated at Blackstone Group, the notorious corporate-takeover firm). His efforts might be dismissed as ludicrous—except money talks in Washington, and Peterson is buying DC reporters to spread his dire warnings.

COMMENT

The retired mogul has created a digital news agency he dubs The Fiscal Times and has hired eight seasoned reporters to do the work there. "An impressive group of veteran journalists," Peterson calls them. I hope they've shaken a lot of money out of this rich geezer, because I predict doing hack work for him will seriously soil their reputations for objectivity and independence.

With his great wealth, Peterson could have also bought a newspaper to publish his dispatches, but he did better than that. He hooked up with the *Washington Post*, which has agreed to "jointly produce content focusing on budget and fiscal issues." (This media scandal was uncovered by economist Dean Baker, as reported on his *American Prospect* blog.) The newspaper is thus compromising its own integrity. It's like buying propaganda from a DC lobbyist, then printing it as if it were just another news story. Shame on the *Post*, my old newspaper.

The first TFT "dispatch" to appear in the *Post*—"Support grows for tackling nation's debt"—made no mention of Peterson's crusade. But it featured the same devious gimmick the financier has been peddling: Congress should create a commission of eighteen empowered to make the "tough" decisions politicians are loath to face—slashing benefits, raising payroll taxes or both. Other members of Congress would cast only an up-or-down vote on the entire package, no amendments allowed. Supposedly this would give them cover. Look, no hands! We just cut Social Security, but it wasn't our fault.

This "reform" is profoundly antidemocratic, because it would strip ordinary citizens of their ability to lean on their elected representatives and exact retribution if they get sold out. Peterson has two Senate advocates, Kent Conrad and Judd Gregg, who are self-righteous fiscal hawks. The TFT story describes the federal deficits as a threat to the Republic yet fails to explain why they are rising: the billions have been devoted to bailing out major banks and Peterson's old chums on Wall Street or to turning around the failed economy or fighting two wars at once.

So why do the TFT reporters (Elaine Povich and Eric Pianin) zero in on old folks and Social Security or entitlements like Medicare and Medicaid? Because those are Peterson's favorite targets. For at least twenty years, he has flogged Social Security as a blight on our future. He's a nut on the subject. His "facts" are wildly distorted or simply not true. Never mind; the establishment press portrays him as a disinterested statesman.

This crusade is dangerous because the "respectables" in governing circles and both parties embrace the same reactionary

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logic. Does government have money problems? Don't restore the progressive income tax on the wealthy or capital; don't cut away corporate boodle in the budget—too difficult politically. Instead, let's whack Social Security while folks aren't watching.

The biggest lie in Peterson's storytelling is his refusal to acknowledge the looting aspect of what he proposes. Despite his inflamed rhetoric, Social Security is not broke—it has a huge surplus of around $3 trillion (*trillion*, not billion). With no changes at all, the trust fund will be solvent for at least another thirty years. In fact, workers retiring now have already paid for their benefits because they paid higher payroll taxes for the past twenty-five years. I might have a little respect for fiscal crazies like Peterson, Conrad and Gregg if I once heard them state these facts honestly instead of demonizing Social Security recipients.

Here is what really worries the fiscal hawks: as the Social Security trust fund built up huge surpluses, the government borrowed the money and spent it. In maybe ten or twelve years, the Treasury will have to start paying back its debts to Social Security. The accumulated wealth does not belong to the government, any more than does the money it has borrowed from China. The beneficial owners are all those working people who faithfully paid their FICA taxes for all those years. If Washington stiffs them now, it will be a bait-and-switch swindle larger than Wall Street's.

A year ago the Obama White House was planning to give Peterson a starring role in its "fiscal responsibility summit." *The Nation* disrupted those plans. I wrote a fierce attack on the billionaire's looting scheme ("The Man Who Wants to Loot Social Security," March 2, 2009). The White House abruptly downplayed its summit and dropped Peterson as keynote speaker. But we knew the assault would come back sooner or later, because many of Obama's lieutenants are devoted to Peterson's fiscal logic. Budget director Peter Orszag once co-wrote a "reform" plan that would raise the payroll tax on young workers and cut benefits for older ones near retirement. Isn't that clever? Pinhead economists evidently think workers won't notice. Candidate Obama said all the right things about Social Security, describing the modest adjustments that would solve any long-term problems. But we learned over the past year not to trust fuzzy expressions of good intentions. We need an explicit commitment from Obama to oppose the sleight of hand of Peterson, Conrad, Gregg and others.

Likewise, people need to confront Democratic Congressional leaders immediately. It has been reported that they might be prepared to go along with this ugly ploy. I find that hard to believe, but we need to find out now, because Conrad and Gregg and their rich friend intend to demand that "commission" legislation be included later this month when Congress votes to raise the federal debt ceiling. That's clever timing designed to stampede members of Congress, since if the debt-ceiling measure is not enacted, government theoretically might be shut down.

Maybe progressives should recruit some Democratic senators to stage a filibuster. Let's see how Harry Reid deals with that. Or maybe they can recruit some bipartisan support in House GOP ranks. Above all, people need to make a lot of noise, because this

Noted.

POETIC JUSTICE: The death of poet **Dennis Brutus** on December 26 at 85 has created an incalculable void. Not merely because he was beloved as the "singing voice of the South African Liberation Movement," a man who broke stones with **Nelson Mandela** in prison, but because he remained a tireless freedom fighter. Whatever the issue, Dennis was there acting as a voice for the voiceless.

But another part of his legacy merits mention. Like no one before him or since, Dennis used sport as leverage to fight for social justice—in his case, to shed light on apartheid. He organized entire blocs of the world around a simple question: how can Olympic officials claim the Games stand for "brotherhood" if apartheid nations are able to participate? It worked. Dennis changed international sports forever. Over the course of decades, the organizations he founded, like the **South African Nonracial Olympic Committee**, hammered nails into apartheid's coffin.

Until the final days of his life, Dennis was in the streets, protesting the demolition of low-income housing to make way for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. In December 2007 he publicly rejected induction into the South African Sports Hall of Fame, saying, "I cannot…join a hall of fame alongside those who flourished under racist sport." It was a remarkable life. As Dennis replied when I asked how he stayed so active in his 80s, "This is no time for laurels. This is no time for rest." DAVE ZIRIN

KEEP ON TRUCKIN': **Tim Costello**, the blue-collar intellectual, truck-driving internationalist and globally respected author who died in December at 64 (from pancreatic cancer), fully embraced the anti–corporate globalization slogan: "Another World Is Possible." Costello was the energetic founder of groups such as the **Campaign on Contingent Work**, the **North American Alliance for Fair Employment** and **Global Labor Strategies**, and he wrote (with **Jeremy Brecher** and **Brendan Smith**) groundbreaking books like *Global Village or Global Pillage* (1994) and *Globalization From Below* (2000), which forged newer and deeper understandings of the importance of international solidarity on economic and social issues.

Costello delighted in the late '90s renewal of activism around globalization, and he celebrated the new tools available to organizers. In one of his last articles for *The Nation* ("Social Movements 2.0," January 15, 2009), he wrote with Brecher and Smith that the "online universe is not simply another place for people to congregate, circulate a petition, debate politics or mail out a newsletter.… Instead, the web is increasingly looking like the invention of the printing press, which radically changed the lives of even those who could not read, by spurring the Protestant reformation and scientific revolution." That was classic Costello: rooted in the old struggle between privilege and the cooperative commonwealth, yet ever at the ready to employ new technologies, adopt smarter tactics and build broader coalitions. JOHN NICHOLS

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scheme would constitute one more fleecing of people already struggling. If the Democratic Party and the president decide to go down this road, arm in arm with the billionaire and the *Washington Post*, they may find themselves in a civil war much like the one tearing up the Republicans. WILLIAM GREIDER

Blackwater Injustice

COMMENT

In a stunning ninety-page decision issued on New Year's Eve, federal judge Ricardo Urbina dismissed all charges against five Blackwater operatives accused of gunning down fourteen Iraqi civilians in Baghdad's Nisour Square in September 2007. The cases were not thrown out for lack of evidence. In fact, Judge Urbina acknowledged in his decision that military investigators found that the shootings were unprovoked, writing that "the specter of improper and potentially criminal conduct was apparent to government officials almost immediately after the incident." Instead, Urbina declared that federal prosecutors committed a "reckless violation of the defendants' constitutional rights" by relying on sworn statements the Blackwater shooters gave in the immediate aftermath of the shooting, statements that were forbidden to be used in a criminal case.

Urbina's order, however technically sound, is a blow for the Iraqi victims' families and sends a message that US-funded private forces are above the rule of law—American law at least.

A source familiar with the US military investigation of the Nisour Square shooting has told *The Nation* that the Blackwater personnel allegedly responsible should never have been allowed to leave Iraq and should have been handed over to Iraqi authorities for potential prosecution in Iraqi courts. The source, who insisted on anonymity because of the sensitivity of the ongoing case, said US military investigators had determined the men were not eligible for the immunity granted to contractors under Order 17, the edict issued by L. Paul Bremer, then head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, which barred Iraqi courts from prosecuting US contractors without US consent.

Order 17 was in effect at the time of the Nisour shooting, and within days of the incident US authorities and Blackwater secretly ferried the operatives out of Iraq despite Baghdad's insistence on prosecuting them. The Bush administration often portrayed Order 17 as granting sweeping immunity to contractors. However, the order clearly stated that immunity applied only if contractors were acting "pursuant to the terms and conditions" of their official contract.

The source familiar with the US military investigation told *The Nation* that military investigators had determined that the men from Blackwater's Raven 23 convoy had no rights to immunity as defined in Order 17 because they were not acting within the scope of their contract at the time of the shooting and had disobeyed orders that would have prevented them from being at Nisour Square. The source also said that because they had fired unprovoked on civilians, they had disregarded official rules for the use of force for State Department contractors, further invalidating any immunity claim.

"In order to be entitled to immunity, you've got to be acting pursuant to the terms and conditions of the contract. That means you've got to be acting according to the rules for the use of force," which authorize shooting only in self-defense or in defense of a principal. "When you're shooting unarmed civilians as they're running away from you, you are not acting according to those terms, so you are not immune from anything. There's no immunity there, and that entitles the Iraqi government at that juncture to press criminal charges under their system." He added, "By every right, the Iraqi authorities should have been able to come and get Blackwater—come and get those guys." According to the source, US officials were intent on avoiding Iraqi courts. "Well, that wasn't going to happen," he said.

"This was terribly damaging to the counterinsurgency efforts because one of the primary pillars of counterinsurgency operations is rule of law. We had folks deployed all over Iraq risking life and limb to hammer the local Iraqis on getting rid of corruption, holding wrongdoers accountable and following the rule of law. One standard is for everybody, not just some, and we're preaching that and slamming that all over the country and, on the same token, now we're the ones saying, 'Well, the rule of law applies to you, but not us.' That's what this did. It utterly undermined the enormous work that had gone into that country." The only "credible substitute" to Iraqi prosecution, he said, "would be to hold Blackwater accountable in our courts. That had to happen—it must happen."

After the Iraqi government announced its intent to prosecute the Blackwater men in Iraq, the United States argued that under Order 17 the US legal system was the only venue available for them to seek justice. Under intense pressure from Congress and Baghdad, the Bush Justice Department reluctantly began seeking indictments against Blackwater personnel. In December 2008 a grand jury indicted five operatives on manslaughter charges while a sixth contractor pleaded guilty to killing an unarmed Iraqi civilian. The case was set to go to trial in February.

Then came Judge Urbina's New Year's Eve ruling dismissing all charges against the Blackwater operatives on the grounds that their constitutional rights had been violated by federal prosecutors. To put Urbina's decision in historical context, Oliver North

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

One Lesson That We Hope Airport Security Screeners Will Learn From the Attempted Airliner Bombing On Christmas Day

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escaped criminal liability for his role in the Iran/Contra affair, despite mountains of evidence against him, precisely the same way. Indeed, Urbina cited the North cases in his Blackwater decision.

"Technically, Urbina's legal analysis all seems to be correct," said military and constitutional law expert Scott Horton. "The problem at the end of the day is with the remedy. Because these prosecutors behaved unethically, the Blackwater guys are off the hook, and there's no prosecution? That's just bizarre." Horton, who has closely monitored the case, said he was "infuriated at the incredible laziness of the prosecution," saying that prosecutors engaged in "deceptive, abusive and unethical conduct."

In light of Urbina's ruling, Horton said that the Iraqi government would be justified in asking the Obama administration to extradite the Blackwater operatives. Iraq, he says, could argue that Order 17, which was the law of the land, legally barred the men from immunity because they were not acting within the scope of their contract. Order 17 also allowed the United States to waive immunity in individual cases and permit a trial in Iraqi courts, something the Obama administration could do.

"The fact that the US is unable for purely technical reasons that have nothing to do with guilt or innocence to bring the prosecution means it's appropriate for them to extradite the men," said Horton, adding that the Iraqis could cite "the fact that the Justice Department attempted to prosecute, which suggests that the US government and US government prosecutors already concluded that prosecution was appropriate. So there is no reason for the US to deny an extradition request—no legitimate reason whatsoever."

Legal experts also say that the Justice Department could seek new indictments against the Blackwater men by convening a new grand jury and re-presenting the case without tainted evidence. It is clear that prosecutors did not need to rely on the Blackwater contractors' protected statements. They already had scores of Iraqi eyewitnesses; the findings of the US military investigation, which concluded the men had fired unprovoked; forensic evidence; and the testimony of the sixth Blackwater operative, who had pleaded guilty and was cooperating with prosecutors. Prosecutors also have the cooperation of three other Blackwater guards at the square that day, who according to Judge Urbina have "identified which members of the Raven 23 convoy were the shooters, provided detailed accounts of the events that occurred at Nisour Square and testified regarding the absence of any threat justifying the defendants' actions."

Jan Schakowsky of the House Intelligence Committee says she and her colleagues will investigate the events leading up to the dismissal of charges against the Blackwater operatives. "This case and the failure to bring these men to justice," she says, "just sends a message that these contractors—at least as of now—can literally get away with murder." JEREMY SCAHILL

Jeremy Scahill, a Puffin Foundation Writing Fellow at The Nation Institute, is the author of the bestselling Blackwater: The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army, *published by Nation Books.*

With this issue, columnist Alexander Cockburn moves from a biweekly to a monthly schedule.

David Levine

David Levine, who died on December 29 at 83, was best known for his brilliant, biting, crosshatched caricatures of literary and political figures, which until his vision gave out had appeared regularly in *The New York Review of Books* ever since it was launched in the early 1960s. Once, when *The New York Review* turned down as "too strong" (David's words) a caricature he had committed of Henry Kissinger, he paid us the compliment of offering it to *The Nation*. Although it caused controversy within the *Nation* office—it showed Kissinger on top and the world, depicted as a woman, being violated by him under an American flag blanket—luckily for us we ran it, and subsequently it found its way into art exhibitions around the country and ended up on the cover of a Harvard art catalog. When *The Nation* ran a story about neo-Nazis in the United States, Levine's cover illustration showed Uncle Sam with Der Führer's mustache. Despite his sometimes savage visual commentary, David was a kind man and a constant source of support to his fellow artists. He was also a great teacher, funny, a bemused observer of the passing scene, deeply subversive and an astonishingly talented Realist painter whose renderings of Coney Island and warm and sympathetic portrayals of the workers in his father's garment shop were a striking counterpoint to his world-famous political illustrations. His son Matthew has set up a memorial blog in David's honor, which he calls D. Levine Dot Commie (davidlevineartist.blogspot.com).

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Alexander Cockburn

From Genesis to Gaia

The Bible's had a rough time of it these past forty years. In 1967 came Lynn White Jr.'s famous essay "The Historic Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," denouncing God's OK to Adam on planetary pillage in Genesis: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion…over all the earth.… Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it."

Late '60s feminists found much to deplore in the Bible too, starting with God's tough talk to Eve in the Garden of Eden—"In sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

Nor did the Six-Day War help the Bible's standing as God's revealed truth and as Zionism's anchor. As Israeli archaeologists fanned out across the newly conquered West Bank and the heart of biblical Judea, they searched for evidence of the historical homeland. The quest had its roots, as brilliantly excavated by Shlomo Sand in his recent *The Invention of the Jewish People*, in nineteenth-century Zionist historiography.

As Sand relates, the post-1967 digs "failed to find any traces of an important tenth-century kingdom, the presumed time of David and Solomon.… The inescapable and troublesome conclusion was that if there was a political entity in tenth-century Judaea, it was a small tribal kingdom, and that Jerusalem was a fortified stronghold." Sand approvingly cites the view of certain biblical scholars that "the Bible is not a book, but a grand library that was written, revised and adapted in the course of three centuries, from the late sixth to the early second BCE."

Degraded in its historical standing, the Old Testament meanwhile swelled in unpleasing outline as a prefiguring of and a mandate for Israel's savage persecution of Palestinians. In 1969 Golda Meir famously declared, "There were no such thing as Palestinians.… They did not exist." Four decades later the Israeli journalist Tom Segev is quoted on the dust jacket of Sand's book as saying, "There never was a Jewish people, only a Jewish religion, and the exile also never happened—hence there was no return."

If a conclusive disrespecting of Genesis was required, wouldn't you think R. Crumb was the man for the job? It would be as seditious as hiring Sade to write the history of the British royal family, a coup de grâce, the final revenge of the antinomian '60s on decency and faith and the bloodthirsty Creator. The patriarchs of the second half of Genesis would be crushed beneath the vast breasts and bottoms, hairy thighs and savage élan of Eve and her daughters. Crumb encourages such hopes in the bit of his *Book of Genesis Illustrated*, published late last year, that I happened to read first: the notes in which he pays homage to Savina Teubal's *Sarah the Priestess* (1984), which argued that Genesis is in part a sequence of clues about the suppression of a powerful matriarchal order in Mesopotamia and Egypt. In Genesis, Crumb writes, "the struggles and assertions of the female characters are all about this."

But this is not an overt theme in Crumb's *Genesis*. Why did Crumb really embark on this task? Maybe the clue is in three inviting words on the cover: "Nothing left out!" It would have been great to have had his frames for all fifty chapters of Genesis back in the '50s, when we schoolboys had only our imaginations to work with, as Lot's daughters get their father drunk and lie with him, or when Sara tells Abraham to go in unto Hagar. There was Onan too, now frame-frozen by Crumb amid *coitus interruptus*.

But the overall effect is more solemn than satirical. Reading the verses in Chapter 15 in which God, a testy old geezer with a very long beard, makes his covenant with Abraham—"To your seed I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates"—I wondered whether Crumb, a Catholic long ago, had converted to Zionism. He uses Robert Alter's 1996 translation, and Alter has had a long association with *Commentary*. But as a Zionist conspiracy this doesn't really hang together. In his interesting writings on Genesis, Alter prudently finesses questions of historical veracity by stressing the book's literary unity, an approach that clearly bothers *Commentary*'s former mothership, the American Jewish Committee, whose website has a somewhat uneasy page about Alter's views of Genesis.

What does bounce from Crumb's pages is that Genesis really is about Jews. In the dawn of mankind there were lots and lots of hairy Jews with big noses, herding sheep and often lying on top of or underneath Jewish women who may or may not have been matriarchs.

In the end, it seems to me, Genesis defeats Crumb. He never quite settles on which way to go—or what, as a dirty-minded satirist, to go up against. But paganism wins on another front. In 1975 Stewart Brand printed in the summer issue of his *CoEvolution Quarterly* Lynn Margulis and James Lovelock's "The Gaia Hypothesis," which advanced the notion that "living matter, the air, the oceans, the land surface" are "parts of a giant system" that exhibits "the behavior of a single organism, even a living creature." Thirty-five years later, James Cameron gives us *Avatar* and the planet Pandora, which is Gaia brought to life in the most savage denunciation of imperial exploitation—clearly American—ever brought to screen. Now a huge hit, *Avatar* is the most expensive antiwar film ever made (at $200 million, about half the cost of a single F-22). "It is nature which today no longer exists anywhere," a peppery German wrote in 1845. But Rousseau is having his revenge on Marx. The night I went to *Avatar* the audience cheered when Pandora, as a single Gaian organism, puts Earth's predatory onslaught to flight and man's war machines are crushed by natural forces. Against Genesis and the Judeo-Christian tradition, pagan mysticism is carrying the day, at least at the level of fantasy. ■

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Katha Pollitt

The Decade for Women: Forward, Backward, Sideways?

How have American women fared in what seems to be everyone's least favorite decade since the Fall of Rome, which at least was fun for the Vandals? (Well, to be fair, today's investment bankers have plenty to chortle over.) Herewith some feminist highs and lows of the era that began with the Supreme Court choosing the president and ended with hope hangovers and tempests in teabags.

Government. Sonia Sotomayor joined the Supreme Court. Before that, Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin showed how far we've come—and how far we haven't. Between them they normalized forever the idea of a woman running for president and withstood a ridiculous amount of sexist garbage, from nasty cracks (from both sexes) about Clinton's legs, clothes, voice and laugh to tinfoil-hat accusations that Palin's baby was actually her daughter's.

In 2000 women were 13 percent of the House and Senate; in 2009 they were 17 percent. The right direction, but too slow: if women have to make up about 30 percent of leadership before they can move a feminist agenda, we're looking at thirty more years of political marginality.

Economics. The earnings of women working full time, year round went from around 73 cents on the male dollar to 77 cents. Good news—especially considering that the Bush administration basically dismantled affirmative action and antidiscrimination enforcement. By mid-2009, women made up 50 percent of the workforce—unfortunately, partly because of male unemployment. Elite women inched forward, going from 15.6 percent of law partners to 19.2 percent, and from 24 percent of physicians to 28 percent. At the same time, women are as concentrated in the same job categories as ever—secretarial, retail, caregiving, primary education. Parking valets still make more than daycare teachers, and in every field men still earn more than women. Conditions for single mothers were deteriorating even before the recession. The percentage of female-headed households in poverty went from 28.5 in 2000 to 31.4 in 2008, but because of welfare reform, the TANF rolls have barely risen. And the mortgage crisis hit black women hardest of all.

Education. The percentage of undergraduates who are female rose to 57 percent in 2007, provoking calls for "affirmative action" for male applicants; in 2006, a sheepish *New York Times* op-ed from the admissions director of Kenyon College conceded that it was already happening. Women now earn 62 percent of degrees in biology, up from 59.2, and 49 percent of biology PhDs, up from 44.8. Take that, Larry Summers! But physics stayed flat, at 22 percent of female undergrad degrees and 13 percent of PhDs, while female degrees in math and computer science have declined to 44 percent and 18 percent, respectively. By 2007 only 26.5 percent of tenured full professors were women. But Women's Studies has been thriving, with about 1,200 degrees now granted annually. And with the ascension of Drew Gilpin Faust to the presidency of Harvard, women head three out of the eight Ivies.

Reproductive Health and Rights. Mifepristone, the abortion pill, was OK'd by the FDA in 2000 but did not, as some predicted, make abortion a private matter, because states moved quickly to bring it under the same restrictions as surgical abortion. Abortion rights continued to be whittled away, with more and more state restrictions and Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy's shockingly patronizing 2007 majority opinion in *Gonzales v. Carhart* upholding a "partial birth" abortion ban without an exception for the health of the mother—an outright violation of *Roe*—on the grounds that the woman might regret her decision later.

On the bright side: the South Dakota abortion ban was defeated at the polls—twice. After a furious struggle, in 2006 the FDA OK'd emergency contraception, *aka* Plan B, without a prescription for women 18 and older. Insurance coverage of contraception went from rare to routine. Young prochoice activists founded groups like Med Students for Choice. The 2004 March for Women's Lives was one of the largest protest marches in US history—not that the media noticed. The decade closed on a sour note as antichoice Democrats united with Republicans to remove abortion coverage from the healthcare bill.

Family Life. Perhaps thanks to massive doses of abstinence-only sex ed, teen pregnancy rose in 2007 for the first time in fourteen years. By 2005 the majority of US women were not living with a husband. Single motherhood, lesbian motherhood, single motherhood by choice and births to women cohabiting with a partner all became more common. Gay marriage was legalized in five states. Despite oceans of wedding porn, women's age at first marriage rose over the decade from 25.1 to 26. Maybe those marriage-shy young ladies read the 2008 University of Michigan study showing that after marriage women with no children do seven more hours of housework; men do one hour less.

Violence Against Women. Not much to crow about here. Rates of domestic violence, murder by intimates, rape, sexual abuse or harassment barely budged, with victims no more likely to get justice. Meanwhile, the number of women in prison increased from 93,234 to 114,852, mostly because of harsher drug laws.

Culture and the Media. Women are still drastically underrepresented on op-ed pages, on Sunday chat-shows, as experts in news stories, and are scanted in literary prizes, awards and Best of the Year lists, as actresses and directors and playwrights. It seemed like 20,248 articles and 1,507 books were published explaining why women's inequality is their own fault.

But Katie Couric and Diane Sawyer mean that two out of the three network news programs are now anchored by women, Rachel Maddow rules on cable, the feminist blogosphere exploded with vitality, and five women won Nobel prizes in 2009.

Not bad, not great. On to the 2010s! ■

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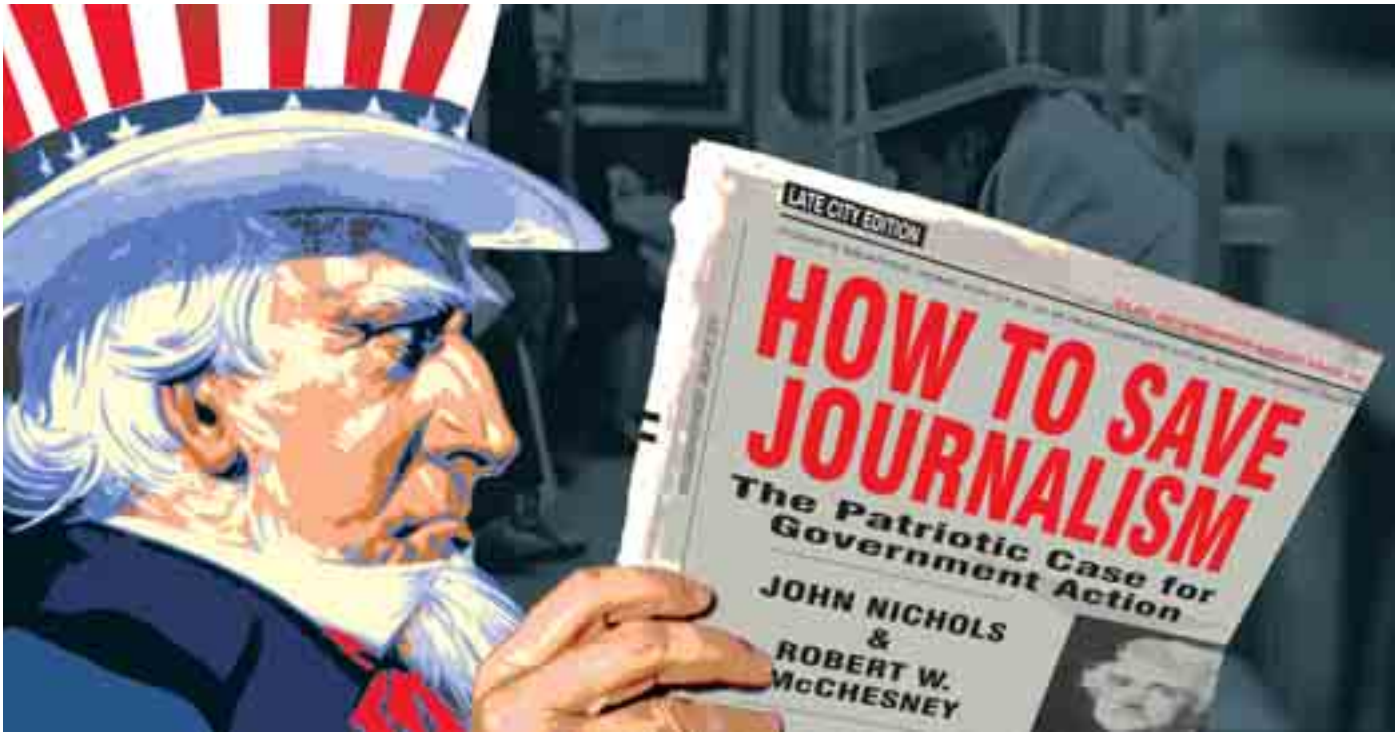

The founders of the American experiment were even by their own measures imperfect democrats. But they understood something about sustaining democracy that their successors seem to have forgotten. Everyone agrees that a free society requires a free press. But a free press without the resources to compensate those who gather and analyze information, and to distribute that information widely and in an easily accessible form, is like a seed without water or sunlight. It was with this understanding that Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton and their contemporaries instituted elaborate systems of postal and printing subsidies to assure that freedom of the press would never be an empty promise; to that end they guaranteed what Madison described as "a circulation of newspapers through the entire body of the people…[that] is favorable to liberty."

Two centuries after Madison wrote those words, American news media are being steered off the cliff by investors and corporate managers who soured on their "properties" when the economic downturn dried up what was left of their advertising bonanza. They are taking journalism with them. Newsrooms are shrinking and disappearing altogether, along with statehouse, Washington and foreign bureaus. And with them goes the circulation of news and ideas that is indispensable to liberty. This is a dire moment for democracy, and it requires a renewal of one of America's oldest understandings: that a free people can govern themselves only if they have access to independent information about the issues of the day and the excesses of the powerful, and that it is the duty of government to guarantee both the promise and the reality of a free press.

When we recommended government subsidies last year in a *Nation* cover article ("The Death and Life of Great American Newspapers," April 6), some publishers and pundits objected, forgetting their Jeffersonian roots and arguing, with no sense of irony, that policies promoting diversity and robust debate would foster totalitarianism. Even well-intended Congressional hearings on the crisis avoided discussion of this logical response.

But as 2009 wore on and the crisis extended—with the venerable *Christian Science Monitor* and newspapers in Seattle and Ann Arbor ceasing print publication to exist solely online, with papers in Denver, Tucson and other cities closing altogether, and with talk of closures from San Francisco to Boston—the urgency of the moment, and the recognition that journalism would not be reborn on the Internet or saved by foundation grants, made it harder to dismiss subsidies. By year's end, the *Columbia Journalism Review* was highlighting a report by Leonard Downie Jr. and Michael Schudson that proposed requiring "broadcasters, Internet service providers, and telecom users to pay into a fund that would be used to support local accountability journalism in communities around the country." *CJR* called the idea a "radical suggestion."

If the rather modest proposal by Downie and Schudson is "radical," then it is merely a fraction of the radicalism of America's founding. And like so many founding precepts, it is a radicalism that has long since been accepted as common sense by the rest of the world. Now Americans must re-embrace that common sense if we are to have journalism worthy of the Republic's promise and sufficient to meet its needs. This is an unavoidable reality. No reasonable case can be made that journalism will rebound as the economy recovers from a recession that accelerated but certainly did not cause the crisis confronting newspapers—or that a "next big thing" will arrive as soon as news organizations develop good Internet business plans. Many of the nation's largest papers are in bankruptcy or teetering on the brink, and layoffs continue at an alarming rate. The entirety of paid journalism, even its online variant, is struggling. There are far fewer working journalists per 100,000 Americans today

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than existed one, two or three decades ago. At current rates of decline, 2020 will make 2010 look like a golden age. When the Federal Trade Commission held its unprecedented two-day conference on the state of journalism in December, the operative term was "collapse." Conversely, the ratio of PR flacks to working journalists has skyrocketed, as spin replaces news.

The implications are clear: if our policy-makers do nothing, if "business as usual" prevails, we face a future where there will be relatively few paid journalists working in competing newsrooms with editors, fact-checkers, travel budgets and institutional support. Vast areas of public life and government activity will take place in the dark—as is already the case in many statehouses across the country. Independent and insightful coverage of the basic workings of local, state and federal government, and of our many interventions and occupations abroad, is disappearing as rapidly as the rainforests. The political implications are dire. Just as a brown planet cannot renew itself, so an uninformed electorate cannot renew democracy. Popular rule doesn't work without an informed citizenry, and an informed citizenry cannot exist without credible journalism.

This is more than academic theory; it is how the Supreme Court has interpreted the matter. As Justice Potter Stewart explained in 1974, the framers believed the First Amendment mandated the existence of a Fourth Estate because our experiment in constitutional democracy cannot succeed without it. That is hardly a controversial position, nor one that is necessarily left wing. It should be inviting to readers of the *Wall Street Journal* and *BusinessWeek*, as markets cannot work effectively or efficiently unless investors, managers, workers and consumers have the credible information produced by serious journalism. Moreover, political decisions about economic issues will respect Main Street concerns only if citizens are kept abreast of the issues by independent news media. American officials urged Asian economies during the financial crisis of the late 1990s to develop independent media or suffer from the corruption and stagnation of "crony capitalism." We need to take a dose of our own medicine, and fast. Unfortunately, misconceptions about the crisis and the proper relationship between government and media warp the debate. Addressing these misconceptions, and getting beyond them, will be the great challenge of 2010.

The most dangerous misconception has to do with journalism itself. Journalism is a classic "public good"—something society needs and people want but market forces are now incapable of generating in sufficient quality or quantity. The institution should be understood the way we understand universal public education, military defense, public health and transportation infrastructure. The public-good nature of journalism has been largely disguised for the past century because advertising bankrolled much of the news, for better and for worse, in its efforts to reach consumers. Those days are over, as advertisers no longer need or seek to attach their appeals to journalism to connect with target audiences. Indeed, to the extent commercial media can scrap journalism standards to make the news "product" more attractive to advertisers, the cure will be worse than the disease.

This takes us to the second great misconception: that the crisis in journalism was created by the rise of the Internet and the current recession. In fact, the crisis began in earnest in the 1970s and was well under way by the 1990s. It owes far more to the phenomenon of media corporations maximizing profits by turning newsrooms into "profit centers," lowering quality and generally trivializing journalism. The hollowing out of the news and alienation of younger news consumers was largely disguised by the massive profits these firms recorded while they were stripping newsrooms for parts. But that's no longer possible. The Internet, by making news free online and steering advertisers elsewhere, merely accelerated a long-term process and made it irreversible. Unless we grasp the structural roots of the problem, we will fail to generate viable structural solutions.

By ignoring the public-good nature of journalism and the roots of the current crisis, too many contemporary observers continue to fantasize that it is just a matter of time before a new generation of entrepreneurs creates a financially viable model of journalism using digital technologies. By this reasoning, all government needs to do is clear the path with laxer regulations, perhaps some tax credits and a lot of cheerleading. Even David Carr of the *New York Times*, who has consistently recognized the point of retaining newsrooms and journalism, falls into the trap of assuming that the "cabals of bright young things" who are swarming New York might create a "fresh, ferocious wave" of new media that will turn the Internet from killer of media into savior. Carr's vision may work for entertainment media, but it is a nonstarter for journalism. As Matthew Hindman's new book, *The Myth of Digital Democracy*, convincingly demonstrates, the Internet is not some "wild west" incubator, where a new and more democratic journalism is being hatched. Internet traffic mostly gravitates to sites that aggregate and reproduce existing journalism, and the web is dominated by a handful of players, not unlike old media. Indeed, they are largely the *same* players.

Journalism is a classic 'public good'—something society needs but market forces are now incapable of generating in sufficient quality.

There is no business model or combination of business models that will create a journalistic renaissance on the web. Even if the market and new technologies were to eventually solve journalism's problems, the notion that we must go without journalism for a decade or two while Wall Street figures out how to make a buck strikes us, frankly, as suicidal.

There will be commercial news media in the future, and the right of anyone to start a business that does journalism should remain inviolable. But there is no evidence that the news media democracy requires will be paid for by advertisers or subscribers. Nor will they be supported by foundations or billionaires; there simply are not enough to cover the massive need. And while it

John Nichols and Robert W. McChesney are the authors of The Death and Life of American Journalism, *just published by Nation Books.*

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might be comforting to think we can rely on tax-deductible citizen donations to fund the news media we need, there is scant evidence enough money can be generated from this source.

House Energy and Commerce Committee chair Henry Waxman was right when he told December's FTC workshop on journalism, "This is a policy issue. Government is going to have to be involved in one way or another." Journalism, like other public goods, is going to require substantial public subsidy if it is to exist at a level necessary for self-government to succeed. The question, then, is not, Should there be subsidies? but, How do we get subsidies right?"

To do that, policy-makers, journalists and citizens must take an honest look at the history of journalism subsidies here and abroad, and they cannot cling dogmatically to the Manichaean view that press subsidies inexorably lead to tyranny.

Even those sympathetic to subsidies do not grasp just how prevalent they have been in American history. From the days of Washington, Jefferson and Madison through those of Andrew Jackson to the mid-nineteenth century, enormous printing and postal subsidies were the order of the day. The need for them was rarely questioned, which is perhaps one reason they have been so easily overlooked. They were developed with the intention of expanding the quantity, quality and range of journalism—and they were astronomical by today's standards. If, for example, the United States had devoted the same percentage of its GDP to journalism subsidies in 2009 as it did in the 1840s, we calculate that the allocation would have been $30 billion. In contrast, the federal subsidy last year for all of public broadcasting, not just journalism, was around $400 million.

No one would dare suggest that our military defense could be covered by volunteer labor. The same is true for journalism.

The experience of America's first century demonstrates that subsidies of the sort we suggest pose no threat to democratic discourse; in fact, they foster it. Postal subsidies historically applied to all newspapers, regardless of viewpoint. Printing subsidies were spread among all major parties and factions. Of course, some papers were rabidly partisan, even irresponsible. But serious historians of the era are unanimous in holding that the extraordinary and diverse print culture that resulted from these subsidies built a foundation for the growth and consolidation of American democracy. Subsidies made possible much of the abolitionist press that led the fight against slavery.

Our research suggests that press subsidies may well have been the second greatest expense of the federal budget of the early Republic, following the military. This commitment to nurturing and sustaining a free press was what was truly distinctive about America compared with European nations that had little press subsidy, fewer newspapers and magazines per capita, and far less democracy. This history was forgotten by the late nineteenth century, when commercial interests realized that newspaper publishing bankrolled by advertising was a goldmine, especially in monopolistic markets. Huge subsidies continued to the present, albeit at lower rates than during the first few generations of the Republic. But today's direct and indirect subsidies—which include postal subsidies, business tax deductions for advertising, subsidies for journalism education, legal notices in papers, free monopoly licenses to scarce and lucrative radio and TV channels, and lax enforcement of anti-trust laws—have been pocketed by commercial interests even as they and their minions have lectured us on the importance of keeping the hands of government off the press. It was the hypocrisy of the current system—with subsidies and government policies made ostensibly in the public interest but actually carved out behind closed doors to benefit powerful commercial interests—that fueled the extraordinary growth of the media reform movement over the past decade.

The argument for restoring the democracy-sustaining subsidies of old—as opposed to the corporation-sustaining ones of recent decades—need not rest on models from two centuries ago. When the United States occupied Germany and Japan after World War II, Generals Eisenhower and MacArthur instituted lavish subsidies to spawn a vibrant, independent press in both nations. The generals recognized that a docile press had been the handmaiden of fascism and that a stable democracy requires diverse and competitive news media. They encouraged news media that questioned and dissented, even at times criticized US occupation forces. They did not gamble on the "free market" magically producing the desired outcome.

In moments of crisis, our wisest leaders have always recognized the indispensible role of journalism in democracy. We are in such a crisis now. It is the character of the crisis, and the urgency of the moment, that should make Americans impatient with blanket condemnations of subsidies. State support is vital to higher education; on rare occasions professors have been harassed by governors or legislators over the content of their research or lectures. But only an extreme libertarian or a nihilist would argue to end all public support of higher education to eliminate the threat of this kind of government abuse. Likewise, the government does not tax church property or income, which is in effect a massive subsidy of organized religion. Yet the government has not favored particular religions or required people to hold religious views.

As for the notion that public broadcasting is a more propagandistic or insidious force than commercial broadcasting because of the small measure of direct state support it receives, the evidence suggests otherwise. When the United States geared up to invade Iraq in 2002, commercial broadcast news media, with only a few brave exceptions, parroted Bush administration talking points for war that were easily identified as lies. In contrast, public and community broadcast coverage, while far from perfect, featured many more critical voices at exactly the moment a democracy requires a feisty Fourth Estate. Not surprisingly, public broadcasting is the most consistently trusted major news source, with Americans telling pollsters it deserves far greater public funding.

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Dr. John L. Esposito is Editor-in-Chief of *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World, The Oxford History of Islam,* and *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam.* He has more than 25 books to his credit.

An international consultant, he is Professor of Religion and International Affairs and of Islamic Studies at Georgetown University, Washington, DC. He specializes in Islam, political Islam, and the impact of Islamic movements from North Africa to Southeast Asia.

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Perhaps the strongest contemporary case for journalism subsidies is provided by other democracies. The evidence shows that subsidies do not infringe on liberty or justice; they correlate with the indicators of a good society. In *The Economist*'s annual Democracy Index, which evaluates nations on the basis of the functioning of government, civic participation, civil liberties, political culture and pluralism, the six top-ranked nations maintain some of the most generous journalism subsidies on the planet. If the United States, No. 18 in the index, spent the same per capita on public media and journalism subsidies as Sweden and Norway, which rank 1 and 2, we would be spending as much as $30 billion a year. Sweden and Norway are also in the top tier of the pro-business Legatum Group's Prosperity Index, which measures health, individual freedom, security, the quality of governance and transparency, in addition to material wealth. The United States ranks ninth.

The evidence is also clear that huge journalism subsidies and strong public media need not open the door to censorship or threaten private and commercial media. Consider the annual evaluation from Freedom House, the pro–private media organization that annually ranks international press freedom. It has the keenest antennas for government infringement of private press freedoms and routinely places nondemocratic and communist nations in its lowest, "not free" category. (It ranks Venezuela, for example—highly regarded by some on the democratic left for its commitment to elections and an open society as well as its wide-ranging adversarial media—as having a "not free" press.) Strikingly, Freedom House ranks the heavy subsidizing nations of Northern Europe in the top six spots on its 2008 list of nations with the freest news media. The United States ties for twenty-first. Research by communications professor Daniel Hallin demonstrates that increases in subsidies in Northern Europe led not to a docile and uncritical news media but to a "more adversarial press." In short, massive press subsidies can promote democratic political cultures and systems.

But must Americans pay $30 billion a year to get the job done right? Possibly not. Digital technologies have dramatically lowered production and distribution costs. Still, the main source of great journalism is compensated human labor, and, as the saying goes, you get what you pay for. We're longtime advocates of citizen journalism and the blogosphere, but our experience tells us that volunteer labor is insufficient to meet America's journalism needs. The digital revolution has the capacity to radically democratize and improve journalism, but only if there is a foundation of newsrooms—all of which will be digital or have digital components—with adequately paid staff who interact with and provide material for the blogosphere.

The moral of the story is clear: journalism and press subsidies are the price of civilization. To deliver this public good in sufficient measure to sustain democracy, it must be treated as we treat national security. No one would dare suggest that our military defense could be adequately covered by volunteer labor, pledge drives, bake sales, silent auctions and foundation grants. The same is true for journalism. Cautious proponents of press subsidies think in terms of nickels and dimes, but we need to think in terms of billions. Columbia Journalism School professor Todd Gitlin got it right: "We're rapidly running out of alternatives to public finance.… It's time to move to the next level and entertain a grown-up debate among concrete ideas."

How can we best spawn a vibrant, independent and competitive press without ceding government control over content? There are models, historic and international, from which we can borrow. No one-size-fits-all solution will suffice, since all forms of support have biases built into them. But if citizens spend as much time considering this issue as our corporate media executives and investors do trying to privatize, wall off and commercialize the Internet, journalism and democracy will win out.

In our new book, *The Death and Life of American Journalism*, we offer proposals for long-term subsidies to spawn independent digital journalism. But we do not claim to have all the answers. What we claim—what we know—is that it is now imperative that emergency measures be proposed, debated and implemented. People need to see tangible examples of "public good" interventions, or the discussion about renewing journalism will amount to little more than fiddling while Rome burns. The point now is to generate popular participation in and support for a small-d democratic response.

The starting point could be a debate about "bailouts" to keep struggling commercial news media, especially newspapers and magazines, afloat. As a rule, we oppose bailing out or subsidizing commercial news media. We believe subsidies should go primarily to nonprofit and noncommercial media. We are not doctrinaire on this point and believe it should be subject to debate, especially for short-term, emergency measures. If subsidies do go to commercial interests, the public needs to get something of substance in return. But the lion's share of subsidies must go now and in the future to developing and expanding the nonprofit and noncommercial sector. Journalism needs an institutional structure that comports with its status as a public good.

What are we talking about? For starters, spending on public and community broadcasting should increase dramatically, with the money going primarily to journalism, especially on the local level. We never thought one commercial newsroom was satisfactory for an entire community; why should we regard it as acceptable to have a single noncommercial newsroom serve an entire community? Let's also have AmeriCorps put thousands of young people to work, perhaps as journalists on start-up digital "publications" covering underserved communities nationwide. This would quickly put unemployed journalists to work. Let's also craft legislation to expedite the transition of failing daily newspapers into solvent nonprofit or low-profit entities. It is healthy for communities to have general news media that cover all the relevant news and draw everyone together, in addition to specialized media. Shifting newspapers from high-profit to low-profit or nonprofit ownership allows them to keep publishing as they, and we, complete the transit from old media to new.

Americans will embrace some of these ideas. They will reject others. The point is to get a debate going, to put proposals forward, to think big and to act with a sense of urgency. Let's assume, for the sake of journalism and democracy, that there will be subsidies. Then all we must do is put them to work in the same spirit and toward the same end as did the founders. ■

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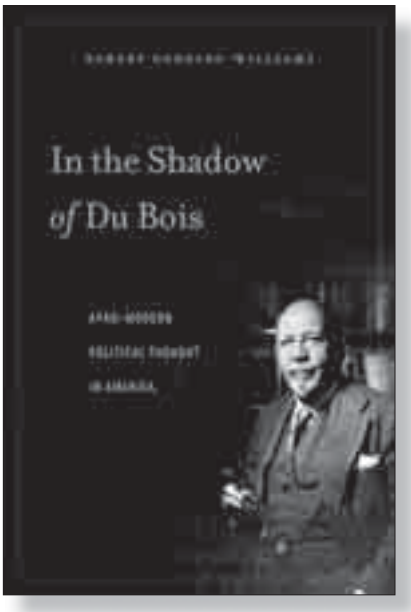

IN THE SHADOW OF DU BOIS

Afro-Modern Political Thought in America

ROBERT GOODING-WILLIAMS

The Souls of Black Folk is Du Bois's outstanding contribution to modern political theory. It is his still influential answer to the question, "What kind of politics should African Americans conduct to counter white supremacy?" Here, in a major addition to American studies and the first book-length philosophical treatment of Du Bois's thought, Robert Gooding-Williams examines the conceptual foundations of Du Bois's interpretation of black politics.

For Du Bois, writing in a segregated America, a politics capable of countering Jim Crow had to uplift the black masses while heeding the ethos of the black folk: it had to be a politics of modernizing "self-realization" that expressed a collective spiritual identity.

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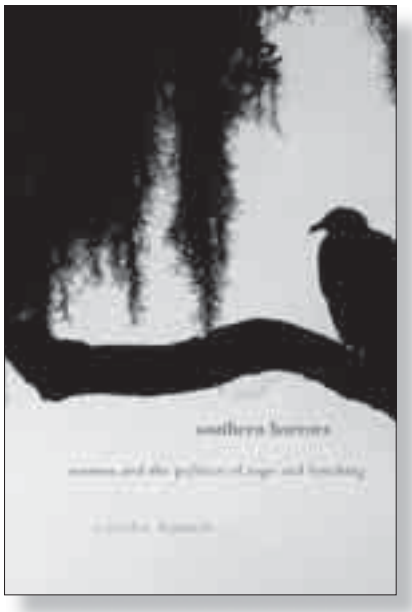

SOUTHERN HORRORS

Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching

CRYSTAL N. FEIMSTER

Between 1880 and 1930, close to 200 women were murdered by lynch mobs in the American South. Many more were tarred and feathered, burned, whipped, or raped. In this brutal world of white supremacist politics and patriarchy, a world violently divided by race, gender, and class, black and white women defended themselves and challenged the male power brokers. Crystal Feimster breaks new ground in her story of the racial politics of the postbellum South by focusing on the volatile issue of sexual violence.

Southern Horrors provides a startling view into the Jim Crow South where the precarious and subordinate position of women linked black and white anti-rape activists together in fragile political alliances.

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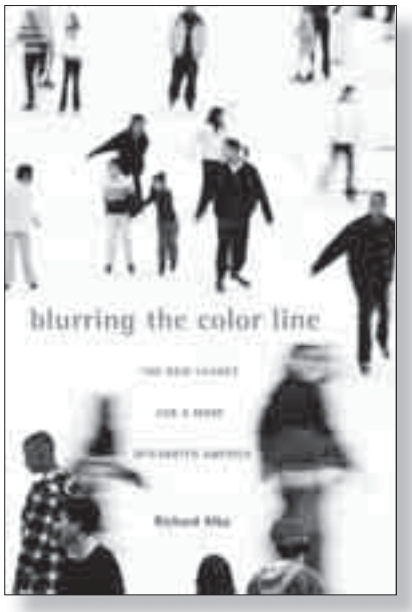

BLURRING THE COLOR LINE

The New Chance for a More Integrated America

RICHARD ALBA

Richard Alba argues that the social cleavages that separate Americans into distinct, unequal ethno-racial groups could narrow dramatically in the coming decades. During the mid-twentieth century, the dominant position of the United States in the postwar world economy led to a rapid expansion of education and labor opportunities. As a result of their newfound access to training and jobs, many ethnic and religious outsiders, among them Jews and Italians, finally gained full acceptance as members of the mainstream. Alba proposes that this large-scale assimilation of white ethnics was a result of "non-zero-sum mobility," which he defines as the social ascent of members of disadvantaged groups that can take place without affecting the life chances of those who are already members of the established majority.

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Imposing Middle East Peace

Forceful outside intervention is the only alternative to an unstable and dangerous status quo.

by HENRY SIEGMAN

Israel's relentless drive to establish "facts on the ground" in the occupied West Bank, a drive that continues in violation of even the limited settlement freeze to which Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu committed himself, seems finally to have succeeded in locking in the irreversibility of its colonial project. As a result of that "achievement," one that successive Israeli governments have long sought in order to preclude the possibility of a two-state solution, Israel has crossed the threshold from "the only democracy in the Middle East" to the only apartheid regime in the Western world.

PETER O. ZIERLEIN

The inevitability of such a transformation has been held out not by "Israel bashers" but by the country's own leaders. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon referred to that danger, as did Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, who warned that Israel could not escape turning into an apartheid state if it did not relinquish "almost all the territories, if not all," including the Arab parts of East Jerusalem.

Olmert ridiculed Israeli defense strategists who, he said, had learned nothing from past experiences and were stuck in the mindset of the 1948 war of independence. "With them, it is all about tanks and land and controlling territories and controlled territories and this hilltop and that hilltop," he said. "All these things are worthless. Who thinks seriously that if we sit on another hilltop, on another hundred meters, that this is what will make the difference for the State of Israel's basic security?"

It is now widely recognized in most Israeli circles—although denied by Israel's government—that the settlements have become so widespread and so deeply implanted in the West Bank as to rule out the possibility of their removal (except for a few isolated and sparsely populated ones) by this or any future Israeli government unless compelled to do so by international intervention, an eventuality until now considered entirely unlikely.

It is not only the settlements' proliferation and size that have made their dismantlement impossible. Equally decisive have been the influence of Israel's settler-security-industrial complex, which conceived and implemented this policy; the recent disappearance of a viable pro-peace political party in Israel; and the infiltration by settlers and their supporters in the religious-national camp into key leadership positions in Israel's security and military establishments.

Olmert was mistaken in one respect, for he said Israel would turn into an apartheid state when the Arab population in Greater Israel outnumbers the Jewish population. But the relative size of the populations is not the decisive factor in such a transition. Rather, the turning point comes when a state denies national self-determination to a part of its population—even one that is in the minority—to which it has also denied the rights of citizenship.

When a state's denial of the individual and national rights of a large part of its population becomes permanent, it ceases to be a democracy. When the reason for that double disenfranchisement is that population's ethnic and religious identity, the state is practicing a form of apartheid, or racism, not much different from the one that characterized South Africa from 1948 to 1994. The democratic dispensation that Israel provides for its mostly Jewish citizens cannot hide its changed character. By definition, democracy reserved for privileged citizens—while all others are kept behind checkpoints, barbed-wire fences and separation walls commanded by the Israeli army—is not democracy but its opposite.

The Jewish settlements and their supporting infrastructure, which span the West Bank from east to west and north to south, are not a wild growth, like weeds in a garden. They have been carefully planned, financed and protected by successive Israeli governments and Israel's military. Their purpose has been to deny the Palestinian people independence and statehood—or to put it more precisely, to retain Israeli control of Palestine "from the river to the sea," an objective that precludes the existence of a viable and sovereign Palestinian state east of Israel's pre-1967 border.

A vivid recollection from the time I headed the American Jewish Congress is a helicopter trip over the West Bank on which I was taken by Ariel Sharon. With large, worn maps in hand, he pointed out to me strategic locations of present and future settlements on east-west and north-south axes that, Sharon assured me, would rule out a future Palestinian state.

Just one year after the 1967 war, Moshe Dayan, then defense minister, described Israel's plan for the future of the territories as "the current reality." "The plan is being implemented in actual fact," he said. "What exists today must remain as a permanent arrangement in the West Bank." Ten years later, at a conference in Tel Aviv whose theme was finding a solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, Dayan said: "The question is not, What is the solution? but, How do we live without a solution?"

Prime Minister Netanyahu's conditions for Palestinian statehood would leave under Israel's control Palestine's international borders and airspace, as well as the entire Jordan Valley; would

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Henry Siegman, director of the U.S./Middle East Project in New York, is a visiting research professor at the Sir Joseph Hotung Middle East Program, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. *This article is based on a longer study commissioned by the Norwegian Peacebuilding Centre in Oslo.*

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leave most of the settlers in place; and would fragment the contiguity of the territory remaining for such a state. His conditions would also deny Palestinians even those parts of East Jerusalem that Israel unilaterally annexed to the city immediately following the 1967 war—land that had never been part of Jerusalem before the war. In other words, Netanyahu's conditions for Palestinian statehood would meet Dayan's goal of leaving Israel's de facto occupation in place.

From Dayan's prescription for the permanence of the status quo to Netanyahu's prescription for a two-state solution, Israel has lived "without a solution," not because of uncertainty or neglect but as a matter of deliberate policy, clandestinely driving settlement expansion to the point of irreversibility while pretending to search for "a Palestinian partner for peace."

Sooner or later the White House, Congress and the American public—not to speak of a Jewish establishment that is largely out of touch with the younger Jewish generation's changing perceptions of Israel's behavior—will have to face the fact that America's "special relationship" with Israel is sustaining a colonial enterprise.

President Barack Obama's capitulation to Netanyahu on the settlement freeze was widely seen as the collapse of the latest hope for achievement of a two-state agreement. It thoroughly discredited the notion that Palestinian moderation is the path to statehood, and therefore also discredited Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, moderation's leading Palestinian advocate, who announced his intention not to run in the coming presidential elections.

Netanyahu's "limited" freeze was described by the Obama administration as "unprecedented," even though the exceptions to it—3,000 housing units whose foundations had supposedly already been laid, public buildings and unlimited construction in East Jerusalem—brought total construction to where it would have been without a freeze. Indeed, Netanyahu assured the settler leadership and his cabinet that construction will resume after the ten-month freeze—according to minister Benny Begin, at a rate "faster and more than before"—even if Abbas agrees to return to talks. In fact, the Israeli press has reported that the freeze notwithstanding, new construction in the settlements is "booming." None of this has elicited the Obama administration's public rebuke, much less the kinds of sanctions imposed on Palestinians when they violate agreements.

But what is widely believed to have been the final blow to a two-state solution may in fact turn out to be the necessary condition for its eventual achievement. That condition is abandonment of the utterly wrongheaded idea that a Palestinian state can arise without forceful outside intervention. The international community has shown signs of exasperation with Israel's deceptions and stonewalling, and also with Washington's failure to demonstrate that there are consequences not only for Palestinian violations of agreements but for Israeli ones as well. The last thing many in the international community want is a resumption of predictably meaningless negotiations between Netanyahu and Abbas. Instead, they are focusing on forceful third-party intervention, a concept that is no longer taboo.

Ironically, it is Netanyahu who now insists on the resumption of peace talks. For him, a prolonged breakdown of talks risks exposing the irreversibility of the settlements, and therefore the loss of Israel's democratic character, and legitimizing outside intervention as the only alternative to an unstable and dangerous status quo. While the Obama administration may be reluctant to support such initiatives, it may no longer wish to block them.

These are not fanciful fears. Israeli chiefs of military intelligence, the Shin Bet and other defense officials told Netanyahu's security cabinet on December 9 that the stalled peace process has led to a dangerous vacuum "into which a number of different states are putting their own initiatives, none of which are in Israel's favor." They stressed that "the fact that the US has also reached a dead-end in its efforts only worsens the problem."

If these fears are realized and the international community abandons a moribund peace process in favor of determined third-party initiatives, a two-state outcome may yet be possible. A recent proposal by the Swedish presidency of the European Union is perhaps the first indication of the international community's determination to react more meaningfully to Netanyahu's intransigence. The proposal, adopted by the EU's foreign ministers on December 8, reaffirmed an earlier declaration of the European Council that the EU would not recognize unilateral Israeli changes in the pre-1967 borders. The resolution also opposes Israeli measures to deny a prospective Palestinian state any presence in Jerusalem. The statement's endorsement of PA Prime Minister Salam Fayyad's two-year institution-building initiative suggests a future willingness to act favorably on a Palestinian declaration of statehood following the initiative's projected completion. In her first pronouncement on the Israel-Palestine conflict as the EU's new high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, Baroness Catherine Ashton declared, "We cannot and nor, I doubt, can the region tolerate another round of fruitless negotiations."

> Israel has crossed the threshold from 'the only democracy in the Middle East' to the only apartheid regime in the Western world.

An imposed solution has risks, but these do not begin to compare with the risks of the conflict's unchecked continuation. Furthermore, since the adversaries are not being asked to accept anything they have not already committed themselves to in formal accords, the international community is not imposing its own ideas but insisting the parties live up to existing obligations. That kind of intervention, or "imposition," is hardly unprecedented; it is the daily fare of international diplomacy. It defines America's relations with allies and unfriendly countries alike.

It would not take extraordinary audacity for Obama to reaffirm the official position of every previous US administration—including that of George W. Bush—that no matter how desirable or necessary certain changes in the pre-1967 status

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may seem, they cannot be made unilaterally. Even Bush, celebrated in Israel as "the best American president Israel ever had," stated categorically that this inviolable principle applies even to the settlement blocs that Israel insists it will annex. Speaking of these blocs at a May 2005 press conference, Bush affirmed that "changes to the 1949 armistice lines must be mutually agreed to," a qualification largely ignored by Israeli governments (and by Bush himself). The next year Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was even more explicit. She stated that "the president did say that at the time of final status, it will be necessary to take into account new realities on the ground that have changed since 1967, but under no circumstances…should anyone try and do that in a pre-emptive or predetermined way, because these are issues for negotiation at final status."

Of course, Obama should leave no doubt that it is inconceivable for the United States not to be fully responsive to Israel's genuine security needs, no matter how displeased it may be with a particular Israeli government's policies. But he must also leave no doubt that it is equally inconceivable he would abandon America's core values or compromise its strategic interests to keep Netanyahu's government in power, particularly when support for this government means supporting a regime that would permanently disenfranchise and dispossess the Palestinian people.

In short, Middle East peacemaking efforts will continue to fail, and the possibility of a two-state solution will disappear, if US policy continues to ignore developments on the ground in the occupied territories and within Israel, which now can be reversed only through outside intervention. President Obama is uniquely positioned to help Israel reclaim Jewish and democratic ideals on which the state was founded—if he does not continue "politics as usual." But was it not his promise to reject just such a politics that swept Obama into the presidency and captured the amazement and respect of the entire world? ■

The Transformation of Hamas

Palestine's Islamic movement has subtly changed its uncompromising posture on Israel.

by FAWAZ A. GERGES

Something is stirring within the Hamas body politic, a moderating trend that, if nourished and engaged, could transform Palestinian politics and the Arab-Israeli peace process. There are unmistakable signs that the religiously based radical movement has subtly changed its uncompromising posture on Israel. Although low-key and restrained, those shifts indicate that the movement is searching for a formula that addresses the concerns of Western powers yet avoids alienating its social base.

PETER O. ZIERLEIN

Far from impulsive and unexpected, Hamas's shift reflects a gradual evolution occurring over the past five years. The big strategic turn occurred in 2005, when Hamas decided to participate in the January 2006 legislative elections and thus tacitly accepted the governing rules of the Palestinian Authority (PA), one of which includes recognition of Israel. Ever since, top Hamas leaders have repeatedly declared they will accept a resolution of the conflict along the 1967 borders. The Damascus-based Khaled Meshal, head of Hamas's political bureau and considered a hardliner, acknowledged as much in 2008. "We are realists," he said, who recognize that there is "an entity called Israel." Pressed by an Australian journalist on policy changes Hamas might make, Meshal asserted that the organization has shifted on several key points: "Hamas has already changed—we accepted the national accords for a Palestinian state based on the 1967 borders, and we took part in the 2006 Palestinian elections."

Another senior Hamas leader, Ghazi Hamad, was more specific than Meshal, telling journalists in January 2009 that Hamas would be satisfied with ending Israeli control over the Palestinian areas occupied in the 1967 war—the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. In other words, Hamas would not hold out for liberation of the land that currently includes Israel.

Previously Hamas moderates had called at times for a *tahdia* (a minor truce, or "calm") or *hudna* (a longer-term truce, lasting as long as fifty years), which implies some measure of recognition, if only tacit. The moderates justified their policy shift by using Islamic terms (in Islamic history *hudnas* sometimes develop into permanent truces). Now leaders appear to be going further; they have made a concerted effort to re-educate the rank and file about the necessity of living side by side with their Jewish neighbors, and in so doing mentally prepare them for a permanent settlement. In Gaza's mosques pro-Hamas clerics have begun to cite the example of the famed twelfth-century Muslim military commander and statesman Saladin, who after liberating Jerusalem from the Crusaders allowed them to retain a coastal state in the Levant. The point is that if Saladin could tolerate the warring, bloodthirsty Crusaders, then today's Palestinians should be willing to live peacefully with a Jewish state in their midst.

The Saladin story is important because it provides Hamas

Fawaz A. Gerges is a professor of Middle Eastern politics and international relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science at the University of London. His most recent book is Journey of the Jihadist: Inside Muslim Militancy *(Harcourt).*

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with religious legitimacy and allows it to justify the change of direction to followers. Hamas's raison d'être rests on religious legitimation; its leaders understand that they neglect this at their peril. Western leaders and students of international politics should acknowledge that Hamas can no more abandon its commitment to Islamism than the United States can abandon its commitment to liberal democracy. That does not mean Hamas is incapable of change or compromise but simply that its political identity is strongly constituted by its religious legitimation.

It should be emphasized as well that Hamas is not monolithic on the issue of peace. There are multiple, clashing viewpoints and constituencies within the movement. Over the years I have interviewed more than a dozen leaders inside and outside the occupied territories. Although on the whole Hamas's public rhetoric calls for the liberation of all of historic Palestine, not only the territories occupied in 1967, a healthy debate has grown both within and without.

Several factors have played a role in the transformation. They include the burden of governing a war-torn Gaza and the devastation from Israel's 2008–09 attack, which has caused incalculable human suffering and increasing public dissatisfaction in Gaza with Hamas rule.

Before the 2006 parliamentary elections, Hamas was known for its suicide bombers, not its bureaucrats, even though between 2002 and 2006 the organization moved from rejectionism toward participation in a political framework that is a direct product of the Oslo peace process of the 1990s. After the elections, the shift continued. "It is much more difficult to run a government than to oppose and resist Israeli occupation," a senior Hamas leader told me while on official business in Egypt in 2007. "If we do not provide the goods to our people, they'll disown us." Hamas is not just a political party. It's a social movement, and as such it has a long record of concern about and close attention to public opinion. Given the gravity of deteriorating conditions in Gaza and Hamas's weak performance during last year's fighting, it should be no surprise that the organization has undergone a period of fairly intense soul-searching and reassessment of strategic options.

Ironically, despite the West's refusal to regard the Hamas government as legitimate and despite the continuing brutal siege of Gaza, demands for democratic governance within Gaza are driving change. Yet Hamas leaders are fully aware of the danger of alienating more-hardline factions if they show weakness or water down their position and move toward de facto recognition of Israel without getting something substantive in return. Hamas's strategic predicament lies in striking a balance between, on the one hand, a new moderating and maturing sensibility and, on the other, insistence on the right and imperative of armed resistance. This difficult balance often explains the tensions and contradictions in Hamas's public and private pronouncements.

What is striking about Hamas's shift toward the peace process is that it has come at a time of critical challenges from Al Qaeda–like jihadist groups; a low-intensity civil war with rival Fatah, the ruling party of the PA; and a deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Last summer a militant group called Jund Ansar Allah, or the Warriors of God, one of a handful of Al Qaeda–inspired factions, declared the establishment of an Islamic emirate in Gaza—a flagrant rejection of Hamas's authority. Hamas security forces struck instantly and mercilessly at the Warriors, killing more than twenty members, including the group's leader, Abdel-Latif Moussa. In one stroke, the Hamas leadership sent a message to foes and friends alike that it will not tolerate global jihadist groups like Al Qaeda, which want to turn Gaza into a theater of transnational jihad.

Despite the crushing of Moussa's outfit, the extremist challenge persists. The Israeli siege, in place since 2006, along with the suffering and despair it has caused among Gaza's 1.4 million inhabitants, has driven hundreds of young Palestinians into the arms of small Salafist extremist factions that accuse Hamas of forfeiting the armed struggle and failing to implement Shariah law. Hamas leaders appear to be worried about the proliferation of these factions and have instructed clerics to warn worshipers against joining such bands.

Compared with these puritanical and nihilistic groups, Hamas is well within the mainstream of Islamist politics. Operationally and ideologically, there are huge differences between Hamas and jihadi extremists such as Al Qaeda—and there's a lot of bad blood. Hamas is a broad-based religious/nationalist resistance whose focus and violence is limited to Palestine/Israel, while Al Qaeda is a small, transnational terrorist network that has carried out attacks worldwide. Al Qaeda leaders Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri have vehemently criticized Hamas for its willingness to play politics and negotiate with Israel. Hamas leaders have responded that they know what is good for their people, and they have made it crystal clear they have no interest in transnational militancy. Their overriding goal is political and nationalist rather than ideological and global: to empower Palestinians and liberate the occupied Palestinian territories.

Unlike Al Qaeda and other fringe factions, Hamas is a viable social movement with an extensive social network and a large popular base that has been estimated at several hundred thousand. Given its tradition of sensitivity and responsiveness to Palestinian public opinion, a convincing argument could be made that the recent changes in the organization's conduct can be attributed to the high levels of poverty, unemployment and isolation of Palestinians in Gaza, who fear an even greater deterioration of conditions there.

A further example of Hamas's political and social priorities is its decision to agree in principle to an Egyptian-brokered deal that sketches out a path to peace with Fatah. After two years of bitter and violent division, the warring parties came very close to agreement in October. The deal collapsed at the last moment, but talks continue. There are two points to make about the Egyptian role: first, Hamas leaders say they feel somewhat betrayed by the Egyptians because after pressure from the Americans, Cairo unilaterally revised the final agreed-upon text without consulting the Hamas negotiating team. Second, many Palestinian and Arab observers think Egypt is in no hurry to conclude the Fatah-Hamas talks. They contend that faced with regional challenges and rivals (Iran,

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Turkey, Syria and Saudi Arabia), the Mubarak regime views its brokering process in the Palestinian-Israeli theater as an important regional asset and a way to solidify its relationship with Washington.

Despite its frequently reactionary rhetoric, Hamas is a rational actor, a conclusion reached by former Mossad chief Ephraim Halevy, who also served as Ariel Sharon's national security adviser and who is certainly not a peacenik. The Hamas leadership has undergone a transformation "right under our very noses" by recognizing that "its ideological goal is not attainable and will not be in the foreseeable future," Halevy wrote in the Israeli daily *Yediot Ahronot* just before the 2008 attack on Gaza. He believes Hamas is ready and willing to accept the establishment of a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders. The US Army Strategic Studies Institute published a similar analysis just before the Israeli offensive, concluding that Hamas was considering a shift of its position and that "Israel's stance toward [Hamas]…has been a major obstacle to substantive peacemaking."

Indeed, it could be argued that Hamas has moved closer to a vision of peace consistent with international law and consensus (two separate states in historic Palestine, divided more or less along the '67 borders with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, and recognition of all states in the region) than the current Israeli governing coalition. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vehemently opposes the establishment of a genuinely viable Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, and is opposed to giving up any part of Jerusalem—and Netanyahu's governing coalition is more right wing and pro-settlement than he is.

Hamas's political evolution and deepening moderation stand in stark contrast to the rejectionism of the Netanyahu government and call into question which parties are "hardline" and which are "extremist." And at the regional level, a sea change has occurred in the official Arab position toward the Jewish state (the Arab League's 2002 Beirut Declaration, subsequently reiterated, offers full recognition and diplomatic relations if Israel accepts the international consensus regarding a two-state solution), while the attitudes of the Israeli ruling elite have hardened. This marks a transformation of regional politics and a reversal of roles.

Observers might ask, If Hamas is so eager to accept a two-state solution, why doesn't it simply accept the three conditions for engagement required by the so-called diplomatic Quartet (the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations): recognition of Israel, renunciation of violence and acceptance of all previous agreements (primarily, the Oslo Accords)? In my interviews with Hamas officials, they stress that while they have made significant concessions to the Quartet, it has not lifted the punishing sanctions against Hamas, nor has it pressed Israel to end its siege, which has caused a dire humanitarian crisis. In addition, Hamas leaders believe that recognition of Israel is the last card in their hand and are reluctant to play it before talks even begin. Their diplomatic starting point will be to demand that Israel recognize the national rights of the Palestinians and withdraw from the occupied territories—but it will not be their final position.

There can be no viable, lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians if Hamas is not consulted and if the Palestinians remain divided, with two warring authorities in the West Bank and Gaza. Hamas has the means and public support to undermine any agreement that does not address the legitimate rights and claims of the Palestinian people. Its Fatah/PA rival lacks a popular mandate and the legitimacy needed to implement a resolution of the conflict. PA President Mahmoud Abbas has been weakened by a series of blunders of his own making, and with his moral authority compromised in the eyes of a sizable Palestinian constituency, Abbas is yesterday's man—no matter how long he remains in power as a lame duck, and whether or not he competes in the upcoming presidential elections.

If the United States and Europe engaged Hamas, encouraging it to continue moderating its views instead of ignoring it or, worse yet, seeking its overthrow, the West could test the extent of Hamas's evolution. So far the strategy of isolation and military confrontation—pursued in tandem by Israel and the United States—has not appeared to weaken Hamas significantly. If anything, it has radicalized hundreds of young Palestinians, who have joined extremist factions and reinforced the culture of martyrdom and nihilism. All the while, the siege of Gaza has left a trail of untold pain and suffering.

If the Western powers don't engage Hamas, they will never know if it can evolve into an open, tolerant and peaceful social movement. The jury is still out on whether the Islamist movement can make that painful and ideologically costly transition. But the claim that engaging Hamas legitimizes it does not carry much weight; the organization derives its legitimacy from the Palestinian people, a mandate resoundingly confirmed in the free and fair elections of 2006.

To break the impasse and prevent gains by more extremist factions, the Obama administration and Congress should support a unified Palestinian government that could negotiate peace with Israel. Whatever they think of its ideology, US officials should acknowledge that Hamas is a legitimately elected representative of the Palestinian people, and that any treaty signed by a rump Fatah/PA will not withstand the test of time. And instead of twisting Cairo's arms in a rejectionist direction, Washington should encourage its Egyptian ally to broker a truce between Hamas and Fatah and thus repair the badly frayed Palestinian governing institutions. If the Obama administration continues to shun engagement with Hamas, Europe ought to take the lead in establishing an official connection. European governments have already dealt with Lebanon's Hezbollah, a group similar to Hamas in some respects, and they possess the skills, experience and political weight to help broker a viable peace settlement.

Like it or not, Hamas is the most powerful organization in the occupied territories. It is deeply entrenched in Palestinian society. Neither Israel nor the Western powers can wish it away. The good news, if my reading is correct, is that Hamas has changed, is willing to meet some of the Quartet's conditions and is making domestic political preparations for further changes. But if Hamas is not engaged, and if the siege of Gaza and Palestinian suffering continue without hope of ending the political impasse, there is a real danger of a regional war. ■

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The Copenhagen Disaccord

Activists are figuring out what went wrong at the climate summit and what to do next.

by MARK HERTSGAARD

PETER O. ZIERLEIN

We have entered the post-Copenhagen era of climate politics—but just what that means is still very much undecided. The summit was widely regarded as humanity's last good chance to prevent catastrophic climate change. It plainly fell short of that goal, but giving up is not an option, not for anyone who cares about preserving a livable planet for our children. Instead, we need the most unfettered, open-minded discussion possible of the terrain confronting us post-Copenhagen and how best to traverse it. Which actions and strategies make sense now? What should governments be pressed to do, and what role should activists, media and civil society play?

Unfortunate as Copenhagen's outcome was, all is not lost. Bear in mind, the goal was to reach an agreement to take effect in 2012, when key provisions of the Kyoto Protocol expire; that timetable might still be met if governments make sufficient progress at meetings this June in Germany and this December in Mexico.

One clear sign of hope was the emergence of a mass movement on behalf of climate action. Of course, this movement did not achieve all it wanted at the summit—mass movements rarely succeed right away—but its massive presence signaled to power brokers that civil society was watching and would not be satisfied with a weak agreement. Indeed, one important achievement of civil society, including the news media, at Copenhagen was that it prevented governments from spinning the summit's outcome as a success. Witness, for example, the about-face by President Obama. On the summit's closing night, he labeled the side deal he brokered with China and other large greenhouse gas emitters an "unprecedented breakthrough." A few days later, after activists and journalists had made clear the so-called Copenhagen Accord's sharp limitations, the president acknowledged in a PBS interview that people "are justified in being disappointed" about Copenhagen.

As civil society decides what to do next, it's important to recognize how much it has already accomplished. US activists have brought about a de facto moratorium on building new coal-fired power plants, notes Lester Brown of the Earth Policy Institute. Brown argues that such grassroots pressure, both here and around the world, may prove more important to halting climate change than international negotiations like Copenhagen, with their glacial pace and lowest-common-denominator results.

Hundreds of local and regional governments have also implemented ambitious green energy programs ahead of federal policy. A pioneer of this effort, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger announced in Copenhagen the formation of the R-20 Group—twenty regions around the world that will "set high standards for cutting carbon and creating green economies, then invite others to join them," in the words of Terry Tamminen, the governor's former environment adviser. Tamminen argues that the work of the R-20, along with improvements in national government policies, will end up putting a price on carbon by 2012. That would be transformational, leading corporations, governments and citizens to shift their economic behavior in climate-friendly ways.

But there is no getting around the central role the governments of China and the United States, the two climate superpowers, play in the drama. Differences between the two appear to be the main reason for the outcome in Copenhagen, though again it is crucial to remember how far both nations moved in the lead-up to the summit. At their November Beijing meeting, Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao broke decisively from the past by pledging for the first time that each nation would limit its future greenhouse gas emissions. Although the emissions cuts announced a few days later fell well short of what science says is necessary, the shift in direction was profound. Now the task is to get the superpowers to extend and honor their promises of better climate behavior.

In this regard, one of the most fascinating post-Copenhagen commentaries came from Mark Lynas, a British writer and activist who has written one of the essential books on climate change, *Six Degrees*. Lynas serves as an unpaid science adviser to the Maldives, the Indian Ocean island nation that led the fight in Copenhagen to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to 350 parts per million. Writing in the *Guardian*, Lynas charged that it was above all China that wrecked the summit. Lynas was in the room during the final hours of negotiations between Obama, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and other world leaders—talks that, he argued, could have produced an agreement that would have had environmentalists "popping champagne corks." But China repeatedly blocked progress, according to Lynas, including by demanding the removal of all specific targets for emissions reductions, even the 80 percent reductions by 2050 that the United States and other rich industrial nations were proposing for themselves.

Such accusations are "totally unjust and irresponsible," re-

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sponded Yunliang Zhou, chief of the political and press office at the Chinese consulate in San Francisco. Referring to China's pledge before Copenhagen to reduce its economy's carbon intensity by 40 to 45 percent by 2020, Zhou added, "Our voluntary target has no conditions attached, nor [is] it linked to any other country's goals. Given the performance of some countries at the conference and their long failed commitments, they have no right or qualification to blame China and other developing countries." Zhou declined to address China's alleged veto of the 80 percent emissions cuts by 2050 by developed countries.

But the United States cannot easily stand in judgment of such foot-dragging. Citing domestic constraints, the Obama administration has pledged to cut US emissions by a mere 4 percent from 1990 levels by 2020, well short of the 25 to 40 percent cuts the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says are required to (perhaps) limit global temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius over pre-industrial levels. China offers its own domestic justifications: with 150 million Chinese living in poverty, economic development must be the top priority, and that for now means more fossil fuels. Some independent experts also refute Lynas's claim that China's commitment to reduce its carbon intensity is a mere PR move. "[That commitment] is a very big deal," says Mark Levine of the China Energy Group at the University of California, Berkeley, who has collaborated with China for the past twenty years to improve energy efficiency. "If other emerging economies were to do likewise, it would cut projected global emissions by 2050 in half."

One root of the US-China disagreement concerns the historical responsibility for climate change. Developing countries have long argued that it is not fair to expect them to slash their emissions when millions of their people live in poverty. After all, it is the historic emissions of rich industrial nations that caused global warming in the first place. The planet has only so much "atmospheric space"—the capacity to absorb carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. With global temperatures having risen 0.8 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and with another 0.6 "in the pipeline" because of the long life span of carbon dioxide, much of the atmospheric space has already been occupied.

This distribution of atmospheric space is the apparent basis of China's objection to the 80 percent target for developed countries and to a related proposal for 50 percent reductions in global emissions by 2050. "If you agree to 2C and a global 50 percent reduction and then accept [the developed countries' 80 percent reductions by 2050], it has the effect of locking in your own future emissions," says a China expert who requested anonymity for fear of jeopardizing professional relationships. "That would allow China much lower per capita emissions than those of the US and other developed countries."

Lynas rejects such arguments as a recipe for disaster. "The historical responsibility argument makes sense in one way only: as an argument for adaptation financing," he wrote in an e-mail. (One of the few bright spots in the Copenhagen Accord was a pledge to mobilize $100 billion a year by 2020 to help poor countries cope with climate change, though it is unclear whether the money will materialize.) But such historical responsibility, insists Lynas, "is not an argument for others to pollute just as much.…That is the logic of 'mutually assured destruction'—where human concepts of equity triumph over the necessity for planetary survival."

The world's leverage over China would doubtless increase if the other climate superpower was moving more aggressively. The Obama administration, Congressional Democrats and many mainstream environmental groups are pinning their hopes on the climate legislation that passed the House last summer and, in somewhat different form, awaits Senate action this spring. More radical environmental groups, such as Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, have criticized the bill as woefully weak—not just on its emissions targets but because it would cancel the Environmental Protection Agency's authority to regulate greenhouse gases. Instead, the bill would rely on a cap-and-trade system, which critics complain is fatally compromised by its giveaways of the vast majority of pollution permits.

The most persuasive defense of the climate bill comes from Joe Romm, an assistant secretary of energy in the Clinton administration who blogs at ClimateProgress.org. Romm points out that the legislation's "lame" 2020 targets get much tougher after 2020 and hit 80 percent by 2050. "If you put in place a shrinking cap on emissions, that will inevitably raise the price of carbon, and that will be transformational," says Romm. He sees legislation as superior to EPA regulation, in part because he suspects that industry lawsuits would cripple EPA action, at least regarding existing power plants and other pollution sources. "I would love to keep EPA authority," Romm says, "but it makes no sense for progressives to take down this bill [on those grounds]. Once you've set up the economy-wide shrinking cap, the only thing you get from EPA authority is easy regulation of new—though not existing—coal-fired plants. But if the climate bill passes, no one is going to build those plants anyway."

"Contrary to what we keep hearing, Obama's hands are not tied by the tragically weak cap-and-trade bills," says Kassie Siegel, senior counsel at the Center for Biological Diversity, whose report "Yes, He Can" outlines the case for unleashing the EPA. "Extremely deep emissions reductions are feasible with today's on-the-shelf technology.… Moreover, the Clean Air Act is a 'technology forcing' statute, so the EPA is supposed to do what's necessary to protect the public health, even if [that] appears impossible with current technology." As for potential lawsuits thwarting the EPA's effectiveness, Siegel replies, "Sure, industry can bring lawsuits, but that doesn't mean they will win, and there is nothing to stop them from suing over a cap and trade system either. Of course we want climate legislation too. But that legislation must build on the foundation of highly successful environmental law we already have, not roll it back."

Romm responds that canceling EPA authority is the price Republicans and wavering Democrats demand for backing climate legislation. "That's a price I'm willing to pay," he adds.

So, tough choices, tough challenges, tough timetables. As we grapple with them, we must above all reject the temptation of despair, which only warps thought and paralyzes action. The fight against climate change has reached a decisive moment. We must seize it with all our hearts. ■

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Books & the Arts.

History Unforeseen

by DAVID CARROLL SIMON

Looking back four decades to the origins of her novel *Summer Will Show*, which was published in 1936, Sylvia Townsend Warner described her protagonist as more of a discovery than a contrivance of the imagination:

> It must have been in 1920 or 21… that I said to a young man called Robert Firebrace that I had invented a person: an early Victorian young lady of means with a secret passion for pugilism; she attended prize-fights dressed as a man and kept a punching-bag under lock and key in her dressing-room. He asked what she looked like and I replied without hesitation: Smooth fair hair, tall, reserved, very ladylike. She's called Sophia Willoughby.

The thoroughness and spontaneity of Warner's description suggest casual familiarity rather than creative exertion: Sophia strode into Warner's consciousness with the same deliberateness and self-possession that sustained her secret life as a boxer.

Warner, one of the subtlest—and, for that reason, least appreciated—of the British Modernists, had a penchant for this kind of tale. Much later, Warner claimed that *Mr. Fortune's Maggot* (1927), her second novel, owed its genesis to "an extremely vivid dream" in which the eponymous protagonist simply appeared, fully formed. In a letter to William Maxwell, her editor at *The New Yorker* (where she published more than 150 short stories between 1936 and her death in 1978), she wrote, "A man stood alone on an ocean beach, wringing his hands in an intensity of despair; as I saw him in my dream I knew something about him." Rather than fashion a protagonist to suit her ambitions as a novelist, once again Warner found herself struck by the serendipitous appearance of a mysterious stranger. With poise and pathos, respectively, Sophia Willoughby and Timothy Fortune commanded Warner's attention, and she, a rapt observer, assigned herself the almost clerical task of transcribing their experiences.

THE STWVA ARCHIVE, DORSET COUNTY MUSEUM

Sylvia Townsend Warner in her flat at 113 Inverness Terrace, London, in the 1920s

Summer Will Show
By Sylvia Townsend Warner.
New York Review Books.
329 pp. Paper $16.95.

I have my doubts about Warner's anecdotal *ars poetica*—her novels are nothing if not calculated—but her oddly passive vision of artistic labor may help explain the astonishing trajectory of her career. Warner is a master of self-effacement. Each of her seven novels is an unprecedented new world, and each of them looks, at first glance, as if it were written by a different author. She conjured up a vision of pastoral witchcraft (*Lolly Willowes*, 1926) and an equally fantastical South Seas (*Mr. Fortune's Maggot*); she dressed Greek myth in Victorian clothes (*The True Heart*, 1929) and her own political convictions in the proletarian garb of Paris in 1848 (*Summer Will Show*); she studied the social hierarchies of eighteenth-century Spain (*After the Death of Don Juan*, 1938) and the constricted but sensuously complex life of a medieval nunnery (*The Corner That Held Them*, 1948); in her final novel she traced the fate of a merchant's family across several generations in Victorian East Anglia (*The Flint Anchor*, 1954).

I have been reading and rereading these novels for years, ever since a friend gave me a copy of *Mr. Fortune's Maggot*, which he had not read, on the hunch that it was something I would like. The gift was the kind of apparition I then learned, from Warner, to

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take seriously. Every time I reread it, I am struck by Warner's uncanny clarity, a quality that belongs, as Warner shrewdly hinted, to the world of dreams.

But an author's reputation and readership cannot thrive on chance encounters alone, and Warner has long remained a secret, perhaps because her experimental impulses were never exuberant enough to grab the attention of the Modernists' most adventurous readers. The recent republication of *Summer Will Show* is her best chance, after all these years, of emerging from the fog of near-oblivion, as thick as it is unfair. The story belongs to Sophia Willoughby, whose conversion from self-protective aristocrat to committed communist is prompted by a love affair with her husband's mistress. On Sophia's long journey to the printed page, she lost her "passion for pugilism" but acquired two of her creator's defining characteristics: ardent love for a woman and, no less zealous, for communism.

Warner's experimental impulses were never exuberant enough for the Modernists' readers.

Warner came late to both attachments. She spent her early years of adulthood engaged in a secret romance with Percy Buck, the music director of the elite Harrow School in Middlesex, near London, where her father was a much-beloved teacher of history. In 1913, when the affair began, she was only 19; Buck was 41, long married and a father of five. Warner first knew Buck as a close friend and frequent guest of her father's, but they subsequently developed a relationship of their own; Warner viewed him as an intellectual equal, and, better still, he shared her interest in music. He also encouraged Warner's first forays into professional writing, drafting her onto a five-person committee responsible for editing *Tudor Church Music*, a ten-volume anthology that is now considered a classic of musicology. In Buck's company, Warner spent the 1920s editing music, writing fiction and submitting her work for publication. By the decade's end, she had published three novels and two volumes of poetry as well as various short stories and reviews. Her poems won the praise of other poets—A.E. Housman and Louis Untermeyer, for example—but it was her first, unexpectedly fashionable novel, *Lolly Willowes*, that earned her a following.

In 1929, with the completion of *Tudor Church Music*, Warner decided to break things off with Buck, whose response to her literary projects had not always been enthusiastic. Dorset, rather than London, was beginning to feel like her center of gravity. The sculptor Stephen Tomlin, whom Warner had met when he was a student at the Harrow School, and with whom she sustained a tumultuous, sometimes romantically charged friendship, had brought her into the orbit of T.F. Powys, another writer whose sui generis novels have sadly faded from view. His wry whimsicality made a gentle impression, a watermark, on the pages of Warner's novels. As early as 1922, she had been spending time with Powys in the village of Chaldon Herring, in Dorset, which would later gain distinction as a literary enclave because of the presence of Warner and her circle. Among Powys's acquaintances was his sometime typist, a young poet named Valentine Ackland, whose impressive height (six feet), formal manners and bohemian predilection for trousers were thrown into full relief by the rustic surroundings.

Sensing Warner's unhappiness as her relationship with Buck disintegrated, Ackland invited her to stay in her rented cottage in Chaldon Herring, which would be unoccupied while Ackland spent some time living in London. Warner declined the offer, but word found its way to Ackland's landlord, who evicted Ackland for subletting. When Warner, soon after, purchased a cottage of her own in the village, she atoned for her inadvertent offense by inviting Ackland to live there as a steward: Ackland would maintain the property, and both of them would split time between London and Chaldon Herring. Neither expected to spend much time together in the cottage, but one night, two weeks after settling in, as they lay awake in their beds, Ackland struck up a conversation from the adjacent room. "I sometimes think I am utterly unloved," Ackland confided. Warner's consolation must have been tender; soon the two found themselves living in a "marriage," as Warner later described it, that would survive Ackland's alcohol-drenched melancholy and her numerous, often agonizing affairs with other women. They remained together until Ackland's death in 1969, and perhaps, to Warner's mind, even after. "Somewhere about 3 a.m.," Warner wrote in her diary in 1972, "I woke in my sleep and there she was beside me in actuality of being: not remembered, not evoked, not a sense of presence. *Actual*."

Ackland subscribed to the *Daily Worker* and the *Left Review*; the latter occasionally published articles she wrote about the miserable conditions of agricultural laborers, underpaid and exploited by landowners, which she had observed firsthand in Dorset. It did not take long for Warner's views, under the pressure of Ackland's, to crystallize: her embrace of communism seemed like the efflorescence of beliefs she already held. As Claire Harman, Warner's biographer, puts it, she had long known her "dislikes" without knowing her "beliefs." Warner made a list of the former in a letter to Ackland: "Priests in their gowns, anti-semitism, the white man who is the black man's burden, warmongers—I had long been sure of them but, beyond a refusal to give money to people who came collecting for missionary societies, my convictions remained unacted desires. Perhaps this was not enough." In 1935 Warner and Ackland joined the Communist Party of Great Britain. Soon they were fundraising, campaigning and attending international conferences, activities that culminated, in 1936, with a short but galvanizing trip to Spain to give medical support to the Republican forces fighting the civil war, working as both nurses and secretaries for the Red Cross unit in Barcelona. *Summer Will Show* was published during their three weeks in Spain, as Franco's forces laid siege to Madrid.

Warner's conversion to communism marked the historical moment at which she fell conclusively out of fashion. Neither *Summer Will Show* nor any of her subsequent books enjoyed the commercial success of her "whimsical" novels of the '20s. I don't think this is a consequence of Warner's radicalization—the novels after *Summer Will Show* wear their convictions lightly. Nor does it seem probable that Warner's readers were put off by her frank depiction of lesbianism, or at least not just by that: Timothy Fortune, who was, in Warner's words, "fatally sodomitic," had proven quite popular.

I think it was the development of Warner's style that alienated her readers. Warner was never inaccessible in the kaleidoscopic manner of her Modernist peers; she faulted Virginia Woolf, for instance, for her "schoolgirlish" habit of shutting out readers by forcefully imprinting her psychology on her prose. Warner seemed to be moving toward a genre of her own. Was she a fabulist? A realist? A pro-

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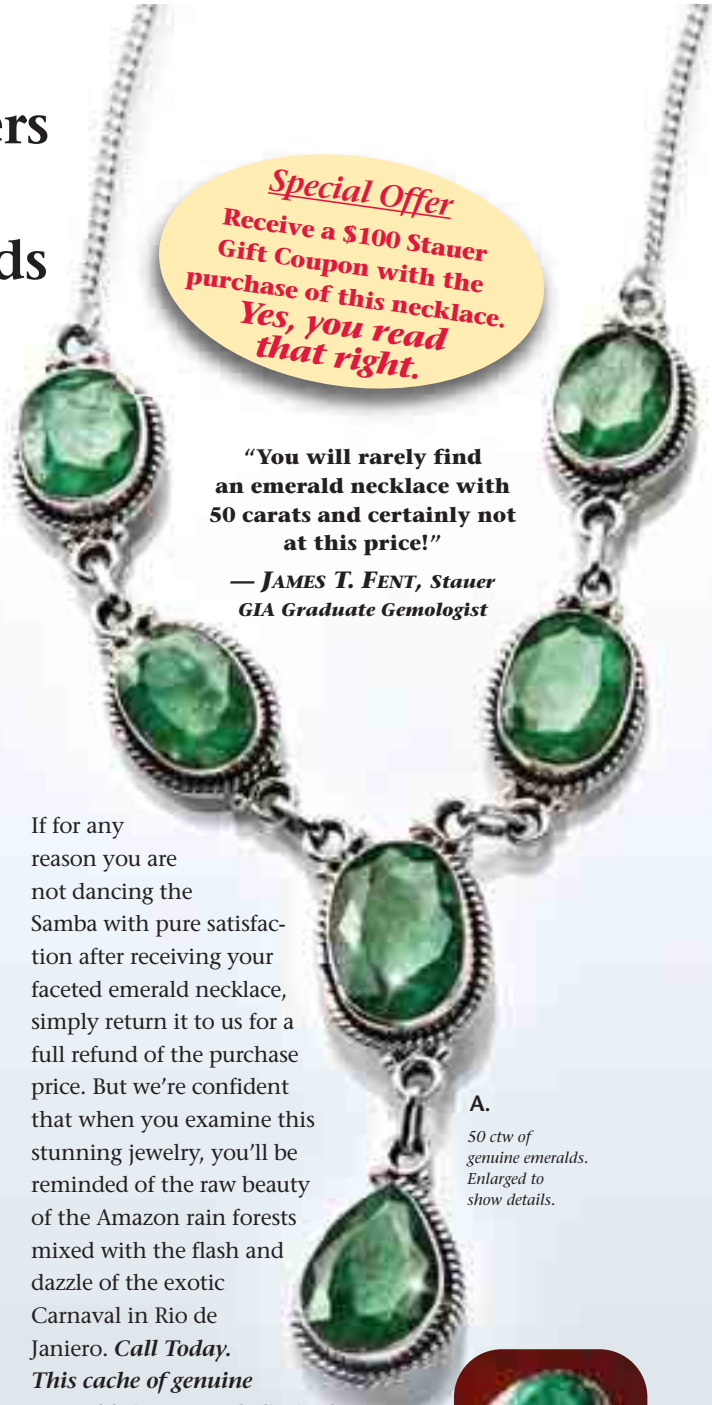

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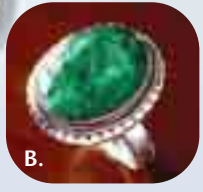
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pagandist? An author of historical romance? Warner was performing a radical experiment, one so subtle that it was misunderstood even by as perspicacious a critic as John Updike. Writing much later, and on the slightly different subject of her prowess as a short story writer, he found space in a generally positive review to fault her for "irrelevancies"—that is, the accumulation of extraneous details. "Her stories tend to convince us in process," Updike wrote, "and baffle us in conclusion; they are not rounded with meaning but lift jaggedly toward new, unseen, developments." But the waywardness of her prose, its tendency to drift "jaggedly" from one topic to another without the subordination of the parts to the whole, was not an oversight. Warner was clearing a new path for fiction without announcing her departure. Her experiment could easily be taken for a defect rather than an exit from tradition. (Her prose sometimes recalls that of the most famous Dorset novelist, Thomas Hardy.) Her style never presented the muscular challenge of a book like *To the Lighthouse*, which laid a gauntlet at the reader's feet. The Modernist masterpiece was an opportunity for feats of readerly strength. Warner's novels were not, and readers were perplexed about what, in the end, they were.

Warner was clearing a new path for fiction without announcing her departure.

Summer Will Show was in one way a record of Warner's personal experience, but it was also the result of a careful cultivation of style. Warner's first novel, *Lolly Willowes*, is remembered as a feminist fable, but equally important to Warner's development as a writer is the evanescent quality of its prose. The story is simple: Lolly tires of her family, leaves London for the countryside and makes a surprisingly casual arrangement with Satan to enter his service as a witch. Lolly's adventure is not really an adventure: it is as free of dramatic reversal or complications as it is of rhetorical flourish. Warner's conclusion presents the reader with the disarming notion that Lolly's submission to Satan is a form of freedom: "A closer darkness upon her slumber, a deeper voice in the murmuring leaves overhead—that would be all she would know of his undesiring and unjudging gaze, his satisfied but profoundly indifferent ownership." Warner's "gaze" is equally "undesiring and unjudging," and her narration registers Lolly's experience without demanding anything from it—not even the diversion of a conventional plot. The aloofness of Warner's voice grants the protagonist the freedom to think and do as she pleases, which is ultimately not much more than to plan and execute a change in scenery.

The novel, which was the inaugural selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club, exuded an aura of witchy glamour that sparked rumors about the author's relationship with black magic. (That Warner, like Lolly, had wearied of her family home near London and abandoned it for a less savory country cohort may have furthered this speculation.) Soon after the book's publication, Virginia Woolf asked the freshly anointed literary star how she knew so much about witches; Warner replied, "Because I am one." Yet the brief celebrity of Warner's witch obscures the novel's true powers of enchantment: Warner's formulations are so lucid that they pass through the reader's imagination with the vividness and insubstantiality of a dream. The prose is ethereal; its rhythms repeat, at the sentence level, the story's vanishing act, disappearing like a gulp of cool water down your throat: you swallow gratefully, but without careful reflection on the contents of the draught. No novel has ever been so easy to reread—as if for the first time.

The publication of *Summer Will Show* revealed a philosophical dimension to Warner's distilled transparency. In language that carries the reader forward with metronomic deliberateness, she envisions historical change as accidental and almost imperceptible—but, for all the ease of its movement, no less decisive. The later novel outdoes the distance of the debut: Warner's gradualist aesthetic feels like a gust of frigid air, perhaps because of the hot-blooded subject matter. *Summer Will Show* was the first of Warner's novels to obviate the charge of "whimsy"—a key word in contemporaneous reviews, and one Warner had underlined when she dreamed up the title *Mr. Fortune's Maggot*, the "maggot" of which refers not to the larval fly but to an archaic use meaning a "whimsical or perverse fancy": in this case, Timothy Fortune's decision to abandon England for the South Seas, where he hoped to convert the indigenous peoples to Christianity. *Summer Will Show* drops these intimations of imaginative flight. Death, in its most quotidian forms—disease, starvation—haunts its pages from the outset.

Warner begins Sophia's tale at her family estate in Dorset, where she devotes her energies to the care of her children, Damian and Augusta. Sophia's husband, Frederick, has run out on her, choosing instead the life of a sensualist in tipsy, bohemian Paris. Warner permits her otherwise restrained protagonist moments of anger at Frederick's infidelity: "Even when she knew for certain," Warner explains, "that he had been many times unfaithful to her, and was again neck-deep in an adultery, she was not jealous. She was furious."

Mostly, however, Sophia carefully calibrates her emotions. Even her self-satisfaction is sternly enforced. "Just as she desired a more respectable tenantry," Warner writes, "Sophia might have desired a more suave and fertile landscape; but in the depth of her heart she knew that one was as unimprovable as the other, and the consciousness of having no illusions made her content with what she had." Deliberation turns inadequacy into a sign of practicality: the deficiencies of her land and her tenant farmers prove only that her expectations are reasonable. Similarly, Sophia imagines her ambiguous marital status as a form of power: "I am far safer than if I were a widow," she thinks to herself. "For at my age, and in my position, I should be pestered with people wanting to marry me, I should have to live as cautiously as a girl. But now I can stand up, and extend my shade, my suzerainty, unquestioned as a tree."

Soon, the conditions under which Sophia lives, which she has rationalized as wishes fulfilled (she assures herself in the novel's opening pages that this is "the life my heart would have chosen"), fall suddenly away. Damian and Augusta die of smallpox. It's 1848, and Sophia travels to Paris to seek another child by her husband, just as barricades rise up in the streets and revolution begins to unfold. This accident of personal and political history signals one of the novel's preoccupations: the unpredictable collision of stories, especially ones that seemingly have nothing to do with one another.

The most important of these encounters occurs when Sophia meets her husband's mistress, Minna Lemuel, a storyteller whose marvelous rhetorical skills have earned her a certain seedy glamour

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in Paris's artsy underworld. When Sophia seeks out Frederick at Minna's apartment, she happens upon a performance that transfixes her: Minna tells a story from her childhood as a Jew in Lithuania, which culminates in her flight from a pogrom. Here, as Claire Harman has noted, Warner presents the reader with a narrative voice totally distinct from, but no less accomplished than, her own. Minna's voice is more inviting than the narrator's—more passionate, more generous with images, more amenable to action. In the midst of Minna's account of the pogrom, she narrates her near-suicidal assault on her persecutors with a fervor, moral clarity and feeling for suspense that are totally foreign to the novel's presiding voice: "Now I knew where to perish. The Christians should see that a Jewess could be no less faithful than a Jew. And while I ran towards the blazing house my old fancies flared up, and it seemed to me that not only should I die defying them, but that my race should be avenged through me, since I would certainly kill many of them before they killed me."

Warner's avoidance of so dramatic a kind of storytelling is one of the novel's triumphs, because it permits her to experiment further with emotional restraint. Yet Minna never becomes a foil: it is her magnetism that draws Sophia toward the personal transformations that accompany the recognizably historical ones. Sophia's turn to radical politics coincides with the sudden onset of her love for Minna, and though Sophia's ideological commitment ultimately surpasses that of her lover, Warner ensures that these dimensions of Sophia's experience remain inseparable. As Sophia's intimacy with Minna deepens, so too does her investment in radicalism; Warner gives conviction the ache of lovesickness and passion the urgency of revolutionary violence.

Perhaps because Sophia's brainy intensity resembles her own, Warner's soft touch is sharpened and burnished. Sophia's thinking often seems to approximate the author's, as in this passage: "God, an enormous darkness, hung looped over half her sky, an ever-present menace, a cloud waiting to break. In the antipodes of God was destiny, was reason—a small classical temple in a clear far-off light, just such a temple as shone opposed to a stormcloud in the landscape by Claude Lorraine that all her life long had hung in the dining-room." The interpretation of experience through geometrically precise language is typical of the novel's narrative voice. In place of the emotional chaos the reader expects—Sophia has just learned of her children's illness—she receives the plainest kind of pictorial representation: light presses against darkness, a rectangular shelter against a smudgy cloud of foreboding. The payoff of Warner's style is not just the detail and exactitude of the realist novel; the judiciousness and conceptual rigor of her language, combined with her effortless pirouetting from one moment to another, drain climactic moments of their distinctive color. Climaxes are not climaxes.

Warner's insight is a simple one—history is never plotted—but its ramifications are complex, particularly because the novel places its ideological commitments on display. Warner's formulation of this insight is most explicit in the novel's final sentence, which concludes a subplot that has spanned some eighty pages. When the second round of revolution breaks out in Paris, four months after the first, Sophia is sent on a risky delivery mission by a communist operative who frequents gatherings at Minna's home. Sophia's instructions are to deliver several packages to various addresses around the city, and then to open one last packet and distribute its contents to passersby. She performs this final task partially and half-heartedly, without ever reading the envelope's contents, *The Communist Manifesto*—that is, not until the novel's final, exhilarating anticlimax. The book's concluding sentence reads, "She seated herself; and leaning her elbows on the table, and sinking her head in her hands, went on reading, obdurately attentive and by degrees absorbed." Sophia's absorption, like everything else that matters in *Summer Will Show*, has happened "by degrees": Sophia becomes "obdurately attentive" after hundreds of pages in which the characters' habitually diffuse attention mirrors the emotional distance of the narrator: Minna studies Sophia's hair "with abstracted attention," and Sophia speaks "inattentively" when, under circumstances that should be withheld in order to preserve some of the book's mysteries, she fires her pistol in an adversary's face. This is a revelation, but it doesn't take the form of an event, a surprise or even a realization. From the novel's very first pages, Sophia's conversion has been developing with the glacial patience of an icicle, and in the end the dream of a communist revolution is realized only in an act of reading.

Writing in this magazine in 1936, Mary McCarthy called *Summer Will Show* "the most skilful, most surefooted, sensitive, witty piece of prose yet to have been colored by left-wing ideology" but conceded that it "could hardly, by direct stimulation, influ-

Nocturnal Crossing

Audacity it is you who will console us least
right here the animal alloy of muscle and voice in the rainy detonation of the day
under the *plus* sign overflown by a squadron of petrels
Thanks to the farmers who regale me with hatred painted on their faces
days perch solely on the shoulders of women more than asleep
Storm or rain
the beaks that put me back between the hands of the scream
will guide them laudably

Covered with fresh encephalon
I rise already even faster
silence
like the bull under the maul
it is a kiss deriving lips
from our clogprints

AIMÉ CÉSAIRE
(*Translated from the French by A. James Arnold and Clayton Eshleman*)

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ence the course of a single Ohio worker's life." McCarthy meant to applaud the novel by praising Warner's literary achievement and pooh-poohing those vulgar Marxists who see no difference between art and propaganda. "The book is important," McCarthy wrote, "because it indicates, by implication at any rate, that the left wing has been able to recruit from bourgeois literature a more highly trained, more cerebral fiction writer than it has previously had in its reserve corps." But Warner understood that "direct stimulation" rarely effected the desired changes in social and political circumstances; she didn't aim to induce change so much as to make sweeping transformations of belief, identity and desire seem tantalizingly possible, albeit erratic and impossible to anticipate or prescribe.

Warner's vision of history is not progressive, at least not in the way that term is ordinarily used. After all, the revolutions of 1848 were all failures. Warner's deceptively straightforward suggestion is that they did not have to be. In *Summer Will Show*, history unfolds slowly and chaotically, as the political order—in both its public and personal dimensions—fragments and recombines, drifts waywardly and settles into place. Like the love affair that emerges from Sophia and Minna's chance meeting, each phase of this revolutionary year feels like an accident. The chaos of history has its own galvanizing potential, however, and its resistance to triumphal (or despondent) storytelling has profound consequences for the novel's protagonist. Its consequences for the novel's readers, on the other hand, are difficult to ascertain. If they are galvanized to action, it may not be as a consequence of having read Warner's book but perhaps, less dramatically, the galvanized reader will include *Summer Will Show* in the retrospective history of her conversion.

By flattening out narrative time, which is also historical time, so that Sophia's transformation cannot be experienced as a spike of emotional intensity, Warner forces the reader to seek inspiration in sources other than actions or events. Even in moments of crisis, Warner's characters register changes after they have already taken place. Sophia experiences her transformation retrospectively: she discovers that—somehow, at some point—she has fallen in love, just as she finds that her convictions (unbeknownst to her) have been turned inside out. Warner's protagonists, generally speaking, stand in opposition to conventional society, but in *Summer Will Show*, Warner allows her characters to confront its strictures without resorting to escape, as did Lolly Willowes, or tragic capitulation, like Timothy Fortune. Rather than grant special powers to her protagonist, Warner weakens the foundations of the status quo. The seams of Sophia's world are continually broken and mended; things are more fabric than stone. Sophia finds her universe torn apart and realizes, after sewing it back together, that nothing appears as it used to. The fact that a communist future is unimaginable should be no obstacle to its realization; history can be counted on to bring about the unthinkable.

At the very center of the novel, just after Sophia and Minna's love has intensified into a kind of certainty, they embark on a surreal expedition—to the menagerie of the Jardin des Plantes, in the midst of revolutionary upheaval—where Sophia apprehends suddenly, and without warning, that everything has changed irrevocably, and her life resembles none she had ever imagined for herself. Here Warner reminds us that the world's ordinary enchantment persists even under conditions of political chaos; the moments the pair experience in the Jardin are brief and porous, and shimmer with the transparency of a mirage. This diaphanous quality had long been Warner's signature, but now it is proof that the world can always be other than it is. Relaxing on a hillock with Minna, listening to the squawking of "tropical birds" and to the "roaring of lions," Sophia ponders her happiness: "Sitting here, and thus, she had attained to a state which she could never have desired, not even conceived. And being so unforeseen, so alien to her character and upbringing, her felicity had an absolute perfection; no comparison between the desired and the actual could tear holes in it, no ambition whisper, But this is not quite what you wanted, is it?" ■

After Macondo

by BEN EHRENREICH

Evelio Rosero's *The Armies* begins almost idyllically, in a garden. To the bright laughter of macaws, old Ismael Pasos picks oranges. His wife, the slightly less-old Otilia, feeds the fish in the fountain as their cats peer down from an almond tree. In this Eden, it is desire, not satisfaction, that rules. A wall divides the Pasoses' garden from that of their neighbors, the Brazilian (who is not, in fact, from Brazil) and his wife, "the slender Geraldina," who lies naked in the sun as her husband strums a guitar beneath a ceiba tree and Pasos, on his ladder, takes his time with the oranges, watching Geraldina "tanning herself in the morning sun, drinking wine, stretched out with no concern other than the color of her skin, the smell of her own hair as if it were the color and texture of her heart."

Every paradise has its troubles, of course, and the ones in Rosero's fictional rural Colombian town of San José are quaint enough at first. Otilia does her best to shame him, but Ismael, a retired schoolteacher and apparently the third oldest man in San José, cannot resist lusting and leering after Geraldina, after her pubescent maid, after nearly every young woman and girl around. "I ask nothing more of life," he says of Geraldina—even after the Brazilian has gently mocked him for his lechery—"than this possibility, to see this woman without her knowing that I'm looking at her, to see this woman when she knows I'm looking, but to see her: my only explanation for staying alive."

The Armies
By Evelio Rosero.
Translated by Anne McLean.
New Directions. 199 pp. Paper $14.95.

Hints arise of troubles deeper than those brought about by Pasos's indiscreet ogling: the usual small-town rancors and resentments, plus "shouts of the war" echoing in the middle distance. Every year the townspeople gather at Hortensia Galindo's to mark the anniversary of her husband's kidnapping. No one knows if it was the guerrillas or the paramilitaries who took him, or perhaps the drug traffickers or the army, and it doesn't matter much. "They make the most of the occasion": they eat, drink and even dance, though this year there is no dancing, because too many of the young people have left town. Then there's the newborn infant found dismembered in San José's dump. "It's not the first time," says Pasos, who mentions in passing that the

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neighbors' maid, "almost plump and yet willowy, with rosy glints on her tanned face," had been orphaned when the town was last attacked and "whichever army it was" tossed a stick of dynamite into the church on Holy Thursday "with half the town inside."

Though that event is purposefully left vague in *The Armies*, in Colombia, where Rosero was born in 1958, it would resonate sharply. In May 2002, when the battle between right-wing paramilitary forces and FARC guerrillas for control of the Atrato River region spilled into the western town of Bojayá, residents sought refuge in the church. The paramilitaries took cover behind its walls, and the guerrillas hurled homemade mortars at them, causing the building's roof to collapse and killing 119 civilians, many of them children. Even by jaded Colombian standards, the toll of the massacre was shocking.

So it's no surprise that the idyll, such as it is, doesn't last. Pasos skips the kidnapping party. His knee is swollen, so he hikes into the hills to see the old folk healer, Maestro Claudino. We are still, at this point, on terrain that a reader whose sole knowledge of Colombia was derived from Gabriel García Márquez would not find altogether unfamiliar. San José is haunted but still picturesque. Though violence renders it bleak, it is still rich in history and in metaphor. But, as Rosero said in a 2007 interview, referring to the village immortalized in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, "Macondo doesn't look anything like the towns of Colombia anymore."

On the way up, Pasos is startled by Maestro Claudino's dog. "I thought it was the war coming down on me," he confesses later to Claudino. War, in Rosero's Colombia, is not that more or less comprehensible phenomenon we read about from afar in the newspapers, declared by one party against another and waged for some variety of rational or at least recognizable cause. Here war is more like the Law in Kafka: cruel, implacable and coldly divine. It cares little for politics or the ideologies of those it enlists to kill and die for it. It falls like bad weather and leaps like a dog from the bushes.

Rosero's depiction of war places *The Armies* within what, at the risk of being overly schematic, we might call the contemporary Latin American literature of disenchantment. Rosero is among the grandchildren of the great literary Boom of the 1960s, part of a generation of novelists who came of age as writers not during the hopeful early years of the Cuban Revolution, or during the insurrectionary tumult and repression that followed it, but in the muddy decades since. The end of the not-so-cold wars of the late twentieth century has in much of the hemisphere meant a bitter sort of peace that can often still feel a lot like war—only without any heroic narrative to redeem it. Thus the depths of disappointment that run like a thick black thread through the work of writers as otherwise diverse as the Salvadoran novelist Horacio Castellanos Moya, the Chilean Roberto Bolaño and Rosero's compatriot Fernando Vallejo.

NEW DIRECTIONS

Evelio Rosero, October 2009

In Colombia, of course, the war never ended but mutated grotesquely on all sides, mating and recombining with the so-called drug war and the elastic politics of cocaine capitalism. Most of the handful of contemporary Colombian novelists whose work has been translated into English—and it is a handful, including Vallejo, Laura Restrepo, Jorge Franco, Juan Gabriel Vásquez and now Rosero—have from various perspectives sought to come to terms with the massacres, assassinations and disappearances that seep daily across the front pages of the local tabloids. There was murder enough in the García Márquez/Carlos Fuentes/Mario Vargas Llosa canon, but the Boom novelists generally found ways to place bloodshed in a historical, psychological and even moral context. "What's new," Castellanos Moya has suggested, "may be the 'democratization' of crime, the absurdity of the slaughter, the loss of reference."

Though Rosero's name will be unfamiliar to most North American readers, *The Armies* is just one of numerous books he's written for adults (he is also well-known in Colombia for his journalism and his children's books) and the novel that earned him the attention of an international audience. *The Armies*, first published in Spanish in 2007, was awarded the prestigious Tusquets Prize and in 2009 won the London *Independent*'s foreign fiction prize, which Rosero shared with his excellent translator, Anne McLean. It is an extraordinary, devastating book, spare and gripping, by turns painful and cruel. Be warned that Rosero makes it impossible merely to witness the horrors he depicts. He implicates the reader, renders you complicit without your knowing it, then tears everything out from under you.

The Armies was Rosero's second stab at writing about the impact of war on Colom-

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bia's civilian population and the kidnapping industry that helps finance the fighting. (Actually, it's his third, if we count *Teresita Cantaba*, his oddly haunting children's story about a disappeared cow. Not to worry: it was hiding in the bedroom the whole time.) In 2003 Rosero published *En el Lejero*, a short and surreal novel—think albinos and dwarfs, malevolent hoteliers chewing raw chicken—about an old man searching for his kidnapped granddaughter in a rat-infested mountain village. That first sketch left Rosero unsatisfied. He began interviewing internal refugees who, displaced by violence in the hinterland, had fled to the city of Cali. He drew on their stories, as well as on newspaper accounts, to build the no-less-nightmarish world depicted in *The Armies*. "All the anecdotes that I narrate are real," Rosero told Mexico's *La Jornada*.

But *The Armies* is hardly a realist novel, much less a journalistic one. It has a stronger kinship to Kafka and Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* than to any of Rosero's immediate contemporaries. No one should complain if it is next to useless as a primer on the tortured complexities of Colombian politics. Despite the book's topicality, the closest Rosero comes to a specific political comment is one barely veiled dig at President Álvaro Uribe: "The President affirms that nothing is happening here, neither here nor anywhere in the country is there a war," scoffs Pasos. Rosero achieves a far broader indictment than any finite finger-pointing would allow. The armies of the title are interchangeable, almost invisible. The actual combatants, once they arrive in San José, are visible only as blurs or fleeting shadows: "We catch astonished, fitful glimpses of the fighting troops, without distinguishing which army they belong to, the faces as cruel as any."

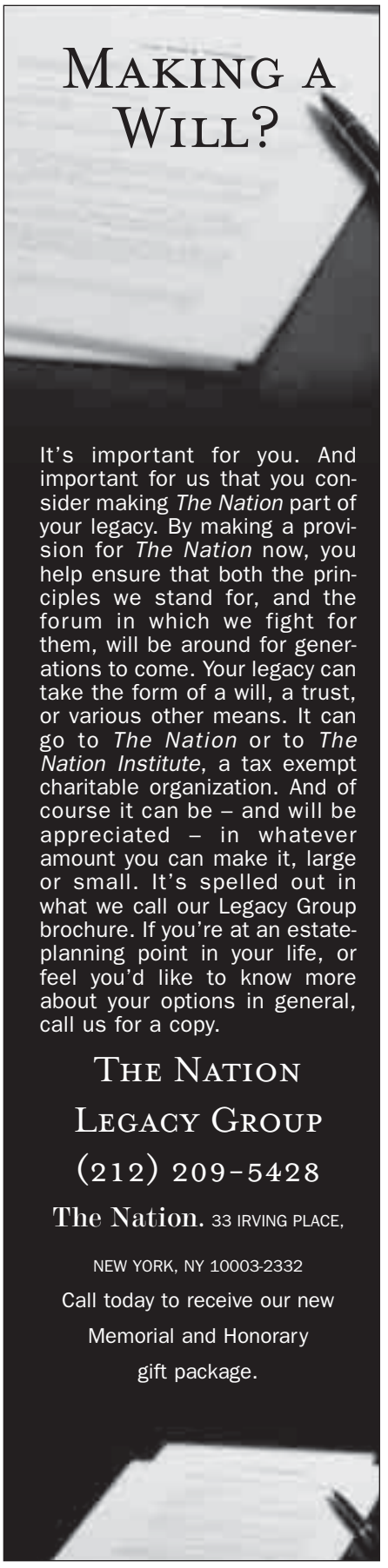
This is of course the point, and it's not just made in the interest of allegory. What distinguishes combatants is the fact of their guns, not the details of their uniforms. At close range, the truth of war is its arbitrariness. Pasos's great mistake is that he gets up earlier than usual one morning and goes out for a walk. All else follows from that error of timing. He hears a shot and sees a shadow run across the street. He looks for a place to sit and watch the sun rise and hears machine-gun fire: this time "it *is* the real war." He heads back home to Otilia but is detained for hours by soldiers in the plaza. The Brazilian has been kidnapped, he hears, though no one knows by whom.

Pasos spends the next quarter of the novel searching for his wife. He looks for her at the house that was once the Brazilian's and is now just Geraldina's—they, whoever they are, took her children too. Pasos looks for Otilia at home, at the rectory, in the plaza. Everywhere he goes, he is told that she has just left. He hears that "they" want San José evacuated, and that its citizens can no longer flee because land mines have been laid around the town. He is about to leave for the hospital, to search for Otilia there, when he hears that "they killed everyone in the hospital including the wounded." Otilia was not among them. No one has taken her, but she's nowhere to be found.

It gets worse, much worse. Nothing is spoiled by revealing that everything is destroyed. The garden is ruined, the fountain blown up, the orange trees blasted before the book is half done. All those Edenic oranges are smashed, robbed of their symbolic weight, reduced to daubs of abstract hue: "sprinkled like a strange multitude of yellow drops all over the garden." Grenades tear a breach in the wall that separates Pasos's yard from Geraldina's. "This hole is a huge irony," Rosero has Pasos observe with a deadpan wink at the collapsing architecture of his own allegory.

This is the novel's strange courage and the source of its power: its author's stoic willingness to take apart everything he's built. Every symbolic vessel is not only emptied but violated. Rosero is unflinching. He does not allow his characters—still less his readers—the meager comforts of their innocence. Even the most elementary forms of narrative desire lead straight to desolation. Because what are readers after all—what are you and I?—but the most perverse and complicit voyeurs, hungry to witness the joys and suffering of others?

In one scene, Pasos finds a gaggle of children crouched in a circle outside his home, their skinny fingers reaching for a hand grenade lying unexploded in the street. He coaxes the thing out of the oldest boy's grasp and tries to chase the children off, but they follow him, an unwilling pied piper: "Silent, impassive, they are surely waiting to see an old man blow up in front of them, never supposing that they too would be blown up." At last Pasos hurls the grenade over a cliff as the children look on, "dazzled by the little flashes leaping up from below.... Their faces are happy, absorbed—as if they were watching fireworks." It hurts to admit it, I know, but doesn't that sound familiar? Pasos is our narrator and unwilling guide so we, unshakable, tag along after him, filled equally with dread and a guiltily delicious curiosity about the horrors the last page will bring. ■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Heath Ledger as Tony in *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*

Imaginariums

by STUART KLAWANS

To say that James Cameron's *Avatar* appeared to us amid hoopla and trumpet blasts would be like saying that John the Baptist had once mentioned Jesus. Generations of small children have been taught the calendar by ticking off the years until *Avatar*'s release. Geeks prepared for the revelation by draping themselves in garlands of e-mails, lauding the vastness that would lie between *Avatar*'s technology and anything they had known before. Even the most earthbound souls, pent in counting houses, cast their eyes heavenward and watched for the shower of gold. By the time of the film's advent, at the only appropriate season, nothing but a miracle would have sufficed—and sure enough, Cameron delivered one right at the beginning of the story, when he raised up his crippled protagonist and made him walk. Healing and transfiguration you got immediately. The crowning miracle, like Jesus', would wait till the end.

Do you think I'm being sarcastic? Then you have not traveled in 3-D through *Avatar*'s extraterrestrial paradise, or watched its Eve remove the clothes and shame from its Adam, or noted that the name of the film's prelapsarian forest tribe, Na'vi, is Hebrew for "prophet." As suffused with intimations of the divine as a Hudson River School landscape, and very much a product of that pictorial tradition, *Avatar* offers you nothing less than transcendence, in both the Lisztian meaning of the word, as virtuosic execution, and in the commonly accepted religious sense. Whether the film makes good on these twin promises (I'll plunge in and say it does) is perhaps less interesting than its having explicitly united them. *Avatar* proposes that the Great Chain of Being really exists and is accessible simultaneously to the characters on the screen and the audience in the seats by means of a neuromotor plug-in.

By now, even if you have not seen *Avatar*, you will know that the excuse for this connection—the plot—is familiar cowboys-and-Indians fare, remarkable only for having combined titanic marketing power with a worldview congenial to readers of *The Nation*. Well, worse things could come along than an anti-imperialist, pro-Gaea sci-fi blockbuster, which pits the nature-loving wisdom of an indigenous people against a mining company's clanking, murderous machinery. That Cameron has sided with the tree huggers (literally) but used sophisticated technology to do so is a readily spotted irony and may be readily dismissed as a criticism, if you consider that his own factory does nothing worse than keep hundreds of people peacefully employed making pictures. Besides, *Avatar* insists that spiritual truths are not only compatible with science but are demonstrably rooted in biophysics—a position that becomes all but irrefutable when asserted by a ten-foot-tall, blue, tiger-striped Sigourney Weaver.

Actually, Weaver is in her human guise, as a scientist with the incense-and-bells name of Grace Augustine, when she makes this argument; but it's her character's ability to incarnate as a Na'vi, and even more so the ability of the film's protagonist, Jake Sully (Sam Worthington), to take on Na'vi flesh, that completes the circuit between viewer and film. Equipment in the movie theater (and on your nose, in the form of 3-D glasses) projects you into an encompassing illusion of Jake's world, where Jake in turn climbs into a piece of equipment—a metallic chamber, suggestive of both a casket and a tanning bed—and is projected into his Na'vi self. To complete the wiring, the Na'vi Jake then takes part of his body—the ponytail—and mates its hairy electric tendrils with any number of similar outlets lying about the forest, allowing him to project himself into the Great Shebang.

Note the powering up from one order of existence to another; note the well-marked steps, which to the impressionable might seem almost empirical, that elevate you to each higher level. And note how the essence of the progression, for you in your theater seat as for the crippled Jake Sully in his box, is a release into greater and greater freedom of movement. This is what makes *Avatar*'s techno-mysticism too thrilling to doubt. Giddy with an ability you could have enjoyed in no other way, you and Jake run, leap, dive and soar through a landscape of sufficient beauty and terror to make your flight itself seem sublime.

Searching for a point of comparison, I think of another sci-fi epic and a celebrated essay composed in its praise years ago. Writing about *2001: A Space Odyssey*, an astonished and delighted Annette Michelson said that Stanley Kubrick had in effect taken the fundamental reality of moviegoing—the kinesthetic experience of the spectator seated before the screen—and translated it into the theme and imagery of a film. I might say that Cameron has done the same thing, and I am tempted to add exclamation points.

But I won't—because the projections and transformations in *Avatar* are actually inconsistent with the experience of the spectator, who may temporarily be a moviegoer but is in essence, first and last, the user of a role-playing computer game. You might almost say that the film version of *Avatar*—there is of course an *Avatar* for Xbox, PlayStation and Wii—functions as an especially successful game session, which Cameron has played for you.

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This isn't cheating on his part, exactly; but neither is it a fair simulation of gaming, which (unlike moviegoing) requires action. Once you think of a player working the console, you understand that the content of *Avatar* is less participatory and more of a pure head trip than the form suggests. I suppose that's why the repeated images of Sully in his metal box are so disturbing—not just because they're claustrophobic and full of pathos but because Sully, as a stand-in for the gamer, ought to be doing something, if only with his thumbs.

Here the carefully crafted links between you and the screen, or between the worlds of science and spirit, subtly break down. It's a small discontinuity, admittedly, in a very big movie—but like all such ruptures, it has something to reveal. Let the exposure of Sully's immobility and isolation point toward everything in you that *Avatar* leaves unengaged. Despite being the most miraculous of the holiday's movies, *Avatar* does not plug into your physical self-awareness; your connections to the people around you; your potential to think and feel more deeply, and more independently, than Cameron asks you to.

Not that Cameron has misjudged his public. The box-office reports have proved him right; and so has the lineup of big holiday movies. Wherever you looked this season, for better and worse, you saw filmmakers luring the audience with some combination of science, spirituality and special effects.

The movie that is, for my money, the most involving of all has no use for science, except as a producer of stage machinery of the antiquated sort: quaint, breakable and comically inadequate to its purpose, which is to lead you to a choice between heaven and hell. This is the setup of Terry Gilliam's *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*, which stars Christopher Plummer as an occasionally immortal and frequently soused guru, now a busker in London, who dares to compete against the wiles of Satan, as portrayed by Tom Waits with a pencil mustache and cigarette holder. The main complaint I can lodge against the film is that the guru's daughter—played by the British model Lily Cole and addressed throughout the proceedings as Scrumpy, as in "scrumptious"—can rightfully object to being nothing but a token in a game between men. Too true. Here, at least, Gilliam might have emulated Cameron, who provides four strong women for one Jake Sully. But if it's any compensation, Gilliam's visual imagination is as beautiful as Cameron's but also idiosyncratic,

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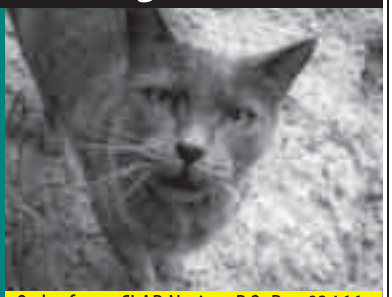
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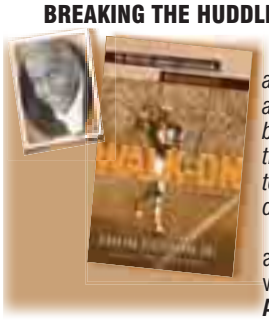
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surprising, grotesque and funny, and is put at the service of ethical choices that you might actually need to confront—such as whether to turn your face from that ragged bum on the corner. In Gilliam's favor, there's also the curiosity, and more than curiosity, of the film's containing the last, fragmentary performance by Heath Ledger. To complete his movie, Gilliam had to enlist Johnny Depp, Jude Law and Colin Farrell to play the remainder of Ledger's scenes, in ingeniously reworked versions. The trick does nothing to diminish the film's exuberance—but it does lend gravity to the supernaturalism. *Doctor Parnassus* is one fantasy that's been visibly marked by death.

There's a bit of death and resurrection going on as well in *Sherlock Holmes*—which might make sense, considering Conan Doyle's involvement with Spiritualism. But nothing in the source material seems to have interested the people responsible for this glorified episode of *Scooby-Doo*: a mash-up of fisticuffs, fireballs, black-magic rites (designed in the Warner Bros. *Harry Potter* house style), ghost-hunting debunkery and also, as an afterthought, a little deductive reasoning. Robert Downey Jr., wearing a fashionable three-day stubble about a century before its time, commits the first mistake he's ever made as an actor, allowing his portrayal of Holmes's hauteur to betray his own superiority to the movie. The director, Guy Ritchie, cuts frantically to make you think you're zipping along; but deep into the third act, when a passing religious fanatic held up a sign that read, THE END IS NIGH, my heart sank, because I knew it wasn't.

Speaking of frantic: let me digress to warn you about *Nine*, the latest act of musical aggression from director Rob Marshall. I don't know what he's got against his fictionalized subject, Federico Fellini (or against Vincente Minnelli, for that matter), but he's made sure that the score is orchestrated to the thickness of a seventeen-car pileup; the vocals are mixed to the level of screeching metal and shattering glass; and the editing approximates the moment of impact, when your head snaps every which way. Penélope Cruz escapes from the catastrophe unscratched, which shows she really can do anything. But *Nine* reveals that Daniel Day-Lewis does have his limits. He cannot sell a patter song while clambering up and down a jungle gym and screaming in an Italian accent.

But to return to the theme of science and supernaturalism: in Peter Jackson's version of the novel *The Lovely Bones*, we at last see what happens when rational thought is rejected (or reduced to a kind of deadly carpentry) while the spirit becomes wholly identified with special effects. Listen to the narration that Jackson has inherited from the book—the first-person account of a young girl who has been raped, murdered, cut into pieces and then left to wander through eternity—and you will think *The Lovely Bones* is meant to be a sensitive, reassuring lesson in leaving vengeance to the Lord. But watch Jackson's direction (so oddly paced and clumsy whenever softer emotions are expressed, so charged-up at every manifestation of evil) and you will see that the movie revels in creepiness, and in making you yearn to squash the creep. Vengeance is yours at the end, because you (in the movie's point of view) are a wrathful Lord, sure to wipe away the wrongdoer like a cloud of pixels. But then, to the covertly techno-enabled God, the innocent too are mere pixels—so what does their suffering matter?

And now, two movies I love that were released during the holidays:

A Town Called Panic, the marvelously demented animation by Stéphane Aubier and Vincent Patar, uses no special effects except stop-motion techniques—and those are applied to toys straight off the shelf of a dime store: a plastic cowboy, Indian and horse. Out of these simple materials and an abundance of imagination comes a dizzying tale of gift-giving disaster, infernal thievery, music lessons and horsey love. *A Town Called Panic* made its US theatrical debut in New York, at Film Forum, and now gets to galumph cross-country.

Police, Adjective by Corneliu Porumboiu (the director of *12:08 East of Bucharest*) takes place in large part around the schoolyards of a Romanian city, features a character who is a teacher and concludes with an astonishingly protracted lesson out of the dictionary. You might say it's an educational film—one that offers instruction in the difference between what we experience and what we put into words, what we believe is right and what the law demands that we do. A young cop tails a high school kid in scenes shot almost in real time, prolonging the surveillance (and tries to develop other lines of inquiry) rather than busting the suspect for simple possession of hashish. The cop learns a lot during the stakeout—but the only knowledge that ultimately matters is the information that can be diagrammed on a blackboard. Impossible to summarize; not to be missed. ■

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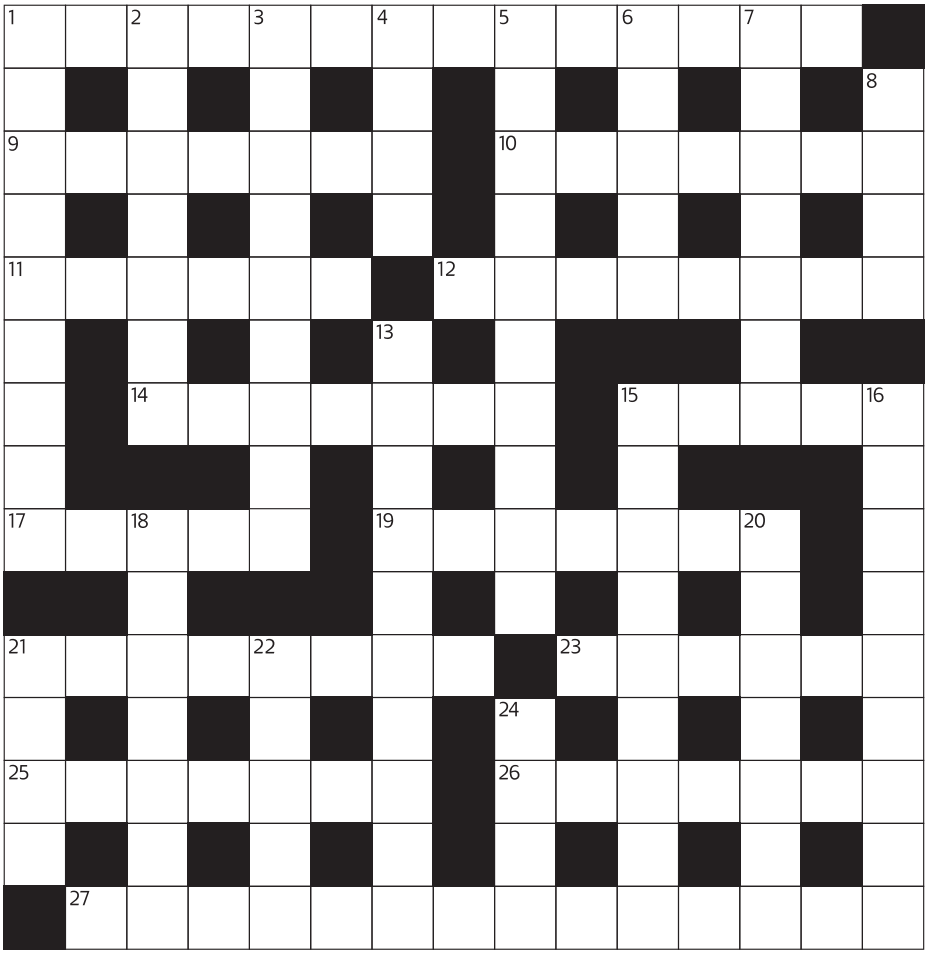

ACROSS

1 Not the campfires watched, by Rebel pickets. (8,6)

9 Monkeys decorations, by the sound of it. (7)

10 Dress for the audience. (4-3)

11 and **5** down Probably lighter than "I was a Fugitive From a Chain Gang." (6,10)

12 A chap commonly can stand a drink all around, with enough silver. (5)

14 Perhaps not legs with the furthest reach! (7)

15 Type secured in a chase for printing or for manuscript. (5)

17 See 13 down

19 Marks the sailor secures. (7)

21 Fail to exclude the apostle? (5,3)

23 and **18** down How things appear when you're down? (3,3,2,2,3)

25 Staying gloomy, no doubt. (7)

26 A few songs on the side? (One hopes the take-off is successful.) (7)

27 25, perhaps, completely gone! (3,2,4,5)

DOWN

1 Taking the census in Meninburg? (9)

2 Not a very conventional root. (7)

3 Two to make the d of England. (4-5)

4 Got up like 6 when it loses its head, in a way. (4)

5 See 11 across

6 Furze. (5)

7 Pig's foot, sometimes in harness. (7)

8 and **20** Most, as a type of accelerator. (4-7)

13 and **17** across Cow, perhaps, but certainly not a purple one. (4,3,3,5)

15 Foul play might lead to it in court. (4,5)

16 Cut off in the middle, pared on the outside, and completely edged. (9)

18 See 23 across

20 See 8

21 Poetically 4, for example. (4)

22 Is this well-known factor in zero? (Or is the animal associated with cash on the nose?) (5)

24 This artist doesn't have his face lifted exactly—just made up differently! (4)

This puzzle originally appeared in the January 7, 1956, issue.

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VOL. CLVIII....No. 35 Natural Science News "For Your Health"

Breaking Research News

Life is short...or maybe not.

Top Harvard researcher says it's "the Holy Grail of aging research."*

...as seen on CBS "60 Minutes"

Don't wait for the drug companies to drive the price through the roof; get the benefits of this breakthrough *natural* extract for pennies a day!

BOSTON, MA—Leading medical scientists are learning that resveratrol, a natural substance found in red wine, is rewriting the rules on the science of aging.

Researchers at the **Harvard Medical School** and the **National Institute on Aging** already discovered that the red wine extract offset the negative effects of a high-calorie diet in mice and significantly extends their life span (*NY Times*, Nov 2, 2006). Now, the latest research indicates that resveratrol may been even more powerful than first anticipated.

At this moment, drug companies are rushing to create prescription drugs that mimic the awesome health benefits of this simple natural extract. A leading pharmaceutical company has already spent $760,000,000 on purchasing the research and development.

The powerful secret of tomorrow's anti-aging pill can be yours today.

You may have thought that an anti-aging pill would only be available far into the future. But the effects of resveratrol have been proven as scientific fact... today. Even better, resveratrol is a naturally-occurring substance found in the skin of grapes and red wine, not manufactured in some laboratory. The key to living longer may be found inside your favorite bottle of red wine.

But don't try to drink yourself healthy, because it would take **50 bottles a day**! Now there is a way to take resveratrol without the alcohol, calories and high cost. Vinotrol™, with 50mg of resveratrol derived from grapes and roots, provides the equivalent of the resveratrol in **278 five ounce glasses of Pinot Noir.**

"We have something (resveratrol) that **extends the life of every species** it's (been) given to. We're 50 years ahead of where I'd thought we would be 10 years ago," said a leading professor of pathology at Harvard Medical School, reported by the *NY Times*.

Such a potent concentrate delivers all of resveratrol's remarkable benefits, promoting circulation, blood flow, immune system, energy and healthy arteries.

Has the "The French Paradox" finally been explained?

Resveratrol is conjectured to be a partial explanation for "The French Paradox," the puzzling fact that people in France enjoy a high-fat diet yet suffer less heart disease than Americans and live significantly longer lives (in some cases up to 40%).

Even though French diets are crammed with loads of bread, cheese, rich cream sauces and decadent desserts... the resveratrol in red wine may have acted as their secret weapon. It is thought that the resveratrol protected them against unhealthy triglycerides, high cholesterol and skyrocketing blood pressure.

Trick your body into "aging in slow motion"

Reduction in cholesterol, body fat and oxidation is believed to help slow the age process considerably. Not only will you feel better, but the powerful antioxidants in Vinotrol™ will help fight the premature signs of aging. Resveratrol will help protect the collagen and elastin in your skin, which can lead to fewer wrinkles and a more youthful appearance.

Can you live years longer and feel years younger?

What's the point in living longer if you're not going to live better? Resveratol floods your system with powerful antioxidants and helps flush out lipids and free radicals. Combined with the extra boost to your brain, immune system and everyday energy, you'll wonder how you ever went without this red wine wonder.

Don't wait decades for giant drug conglomerates to figure out a way to charge you a fortune for the same benefits you can get for pennies on your own. Call today!

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The manufacturer and the laboratories of Vinotrol™ are so confident in their anti-aging technology that they are offering a 30-day, risk-free trial offer. You must call immediately to qualify for the limited number of trials that are available. Start your new anti-aging program today with your risk-free supply of Vinotrol™ (50 mg resveratrol) for just a small shipping & processing fee. Call toll-free 888-214-7134.

Call 888-214-7134 to get your Vinotrol™ 30-Day Risk Free Trial Offer Today!

Mention Promotion Code VL100090 for a Free Upgrade!

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Harvard Medical School, Salk Institute and UC Davis Medical Research Proves That Powerful Red Wine Extract Holds the Secret to Living a Longer, Healthier and More Vibrant Life

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